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TO LUNAR HARMONY

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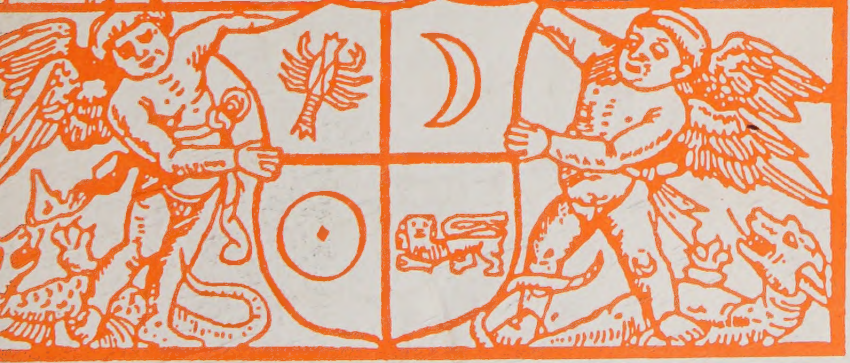
The Witches' Almanac

SPRING 1999 to SPRING 2000

BEING a compendium of ancient lore and legend — the indispensible guide and delightful companion for adept, occultist, witch and mortal alike ...

shows at a glance the phases of the moon, notes the aspects of the planets and foretells their influence on each sun sign in the astrological year to come ...

contains herbal secrets, advice about animals, mystic incantations, sacred rituals and many a curious tale of good and evil.



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ONCE AGAIN IN PUBLIC EDITION

The Witches' Almanac

SPRING 1999 — SPRING 2000

For the first time combining the mysterious wiccan and arcane secrets of an old England witch with one from New England

Prepared and edited by
ELIZABETH PEPPER and JOHN WILCOCK

CONTAINING pictorial and explicit delineations of the magical phases of the Moon together with full and complete information about astrological portents of the year to come and various aspects of occult knowledge enabling all who read to improve their lives in the old manner.

The Witches' Almanac, Ltd.

Publishers Newport

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THE WITCHES' ALMANAC, LTD.
P.O. Box 4067
Middletown, Rhode Island 02842

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ISBN: 1-881098-08-7

ISSN: 1522-3183

First Printing January 1999

Printed in the United States of America

A witch believes the inner universe of imagination, intuition, beauty, and goodness is richer in value than the outside world of accepted fact. And because human beings devised systems to record time's passage with arbitrary rules and dubious limits, we intended merely a nod toward the millennium as it passed. But certain indefinable forces took over and determined otherwise.

Sometimes a mysterious entity takes charge of a project and there's nothing to do but follow its lead. So it has been with the current issue of *The Witches' Almanac*—ninth edition of the nineties series, 1999. Occult historians from Pythagoras on agree about the power of number, the number nine being universally regarded as mystic and sacred. So be it. Nine figures prominently in the pages to follow.

Another theme surfaced: the mythic role of psychopompos, literally "conductor of souls." All transitions benefit from the presence of a spirit guide and guardian figure. Passing from this century to the next may require such service.

Nine planets, the wanderers, revolve around the Sun. Two of the most potent heavenly bodies, Jupiter and Saturn, will transit the earth sign of Taurus during the coming year. Will jovial Jupiter triumph over dour Saturn? You may find the answer in Presage.

HOLIDAYS

Spring 1999 to Spring 2000

March 20	Vernal Equinox
April 1	All Fools' Day
April 30	Beltane Eve
May 1	Roodmas
May 8	White Lotus Day
May 9, 11, 13	Lemuria
May 29	Oak Apple Day
June 5	Night of the Watchers
June 20	Midsummer Night
June 21	Summer Solstice
June 24	St. John's Day
July 31	Lughnassad Eve
August 1	Lammas
August 13	Diana's Day
August 29	Day of Thoth
September 23	Autumnal Equinox
October 31	Samhain Eve
November 1	Hallowmas
November 16	Hecate Night
December 17	Saturnalia
December 22	Winter Solstice
January 9	Feast of Janus
February 1	Oimelc Eve
February 2	Candlemas
March 1	Matronalia

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HYMN TO INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY

I

The awful shadow of some unseen Power
Floats though unseen among us, visiting
This various world with as inconstant wing
As summer winds that creep from flower
to flower;
Like moonbeams that behind some piny
mountain shower,
It visits with inconstant glance
Each human heart and countenance;
Like hues and harmonies of evening,
Like clouds in starlight widely spread,
Like memory of music fled,
Like aught that for its grace may be
Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.

— SHELLEY

MOON GARDENING

BY PHASE

Sow, transplant, bud and graft *Plow, cultivate, weed and reap*

NEW

First Quarter

FULL

Last Quarter

NEW

Plant above-ground crops with outside seeds, flowering annuals.

Plant above-ground crops with inside seeds.

Plant root crops, bulbs, biennials, perennials.

Do not plant.

BY PLACE IN THE ZODIAC

Fruitful Signs

Cancer - Most favorable planting time for all leafy crops bearing fruit above ground. Prune to encourage growth in Cancer.

Scorpio - Second only to Cancer, a Scorpion Moon promises good germination and swift growth. In Scorpio, prune for bud development.

Pisces - Planting in the last of the Watery Triad is especially effective for root growth.

Taurus - The best time to plant root crops is when the Moon is in the sign of the Bull.

Capricorn - The Earthy Goat Moon promotes the growth of rhizomes, bulbs, roots, tubers and stalks. Prune now to strengthen branches.

Libra - Airy Libra may be the least beneficial of the Fruitful Signs, but is excellent for planting flowers and vines.

Barren Signs

Leo - Foremost of the Barren Signs, the Lion Moon is the best time to effectively destroy weeds and pests. Cultivate and till the soil.

Gemini - Harvest in the Airy Twins; gather herbs and roots. Reap when the Moon is in a sign of Air or Fire to assure best storage.

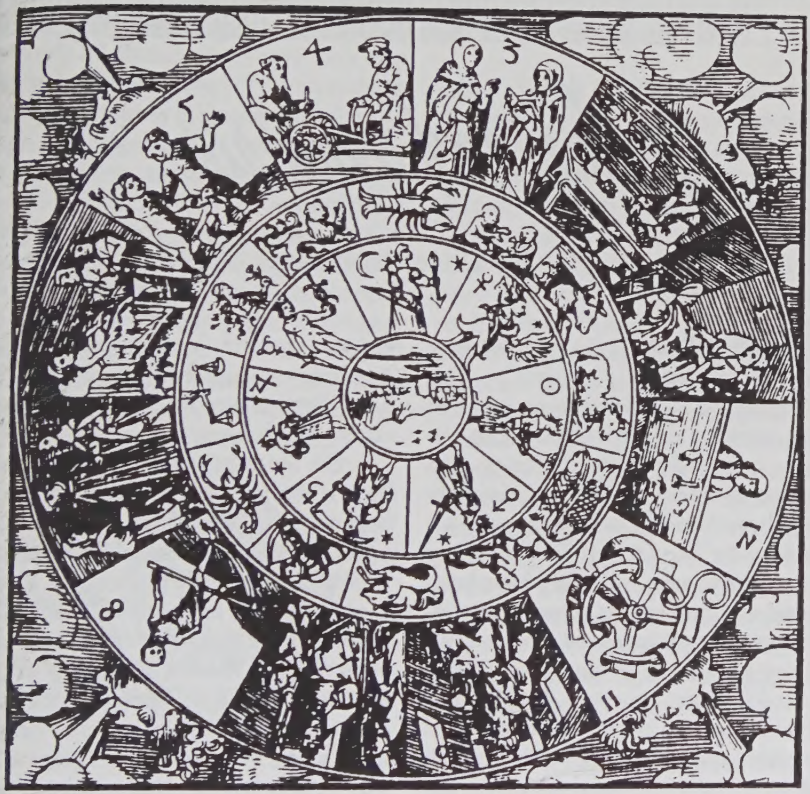
Virgo - Plow, cultivate, and control weeds and pests when the moon is in Virgo.

Sagittarius - Plow and cultivate the soil or harvest under the Archer Moon. Prune now to discourage growth.

Aquarius - This dry sign of Air is perfect for ground cultivation, reaping crops, gathering roots and herbs. It is a good time to destroy weeds and pests.

Aries - Cultivate, weed, and prune to lessen growth. Gather herbs and roots for storage.

Consult our Moon Calendar pages for phase and place in the zodiac circle. The Moon remains in a sign for about two-and-a-half days. Match your gardening activity to the day that follows the Moon's entry into that zodiac sign.



World Winds Erhard S. Schon, 1515

There's only one corner of the universe
you can be certain of improving,
and that's your own self.

— ALDOUS HUXLEY

today and tomorrow

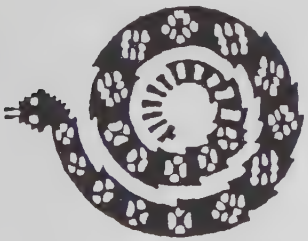
By Oliver Johnson

WHERE DID OUR favorite nursery rhymes originate? A writer in The Washington Post devoted an essay to this question and concluded that nobody knows for sure. As many as a quarter of the ones we know today may have been familiar to Shakespeare, according to *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*, and could have been based on real events. One example, "Sing a song of sixpence / A pocket full of rye / Four and twenty blackbirds / Baked in a pie" has been described as alluding to "the choirs of Tudor monasteries, the printing of the English Bible, and the infinite workings of the solar system," speculate the dictionary's authors, but might just have been a simple rhyme with no other significance.

On the other hand, the fact that "when the pie was opened, the birds began to sing" may have originated in a 16th-century Italian cookbook recipe which described how to make a pie containing live birds which would fly out when the dish was cut open. Another rhyme, "Rock-a-Bye Baby" (said to have been the first poem written in America), is believed to have originated with a Mayflower immigrant who was struck by the Native American

practice of hanging birch bark cradles on the branches of trees where they were rocked by the wind.

FRENCH EXPLORERS claim to have tracked down the origin of a centuries-old tale of fabled giant "ants" that dug up gold in some far-off El Dorado, a story first told by Herodotus 2500 years ago and argued over ever since. Returning from a journey to the Himalayas in northern Pakistan, ethnologist Michel Peissel says he discovered a high plateau overlooking the Indus River where furry marmots tossed piles of gold-bearing sand which were regularly sifted by local tribes. Peissel claims his find vindicates Herodotus and that the Persian word for marmot is the equivalent to "mountain ant".



A CONNECTION BETWEEN animals and the weather was examined by writer Mary Reed in the magazine *Weatherwise* which explained that European folklore was rich in such references. Frogs used to be killed to invoke rain in Germany, and snakes symbolized lightning in ancient Phoenician and Chaldean mythologies. Ravens and crows were employed by the Haida Indians of the Pacific Northwest coast to request a good wind. "Connections between the sun and the animal kingdom are worldwide," Reed wrote, pointing to the Peruvian jaguar and the Ammonite lion (echoed in the zodiac sign Leo) and mentioning, but not explaining "the ill-fated Dog Days of summer, believed by the ancients to be so baleful that all manner of horror befell the world when they held sway in July and August."

LAST YEAR (1998) saw the start of two more widely different quests for the lost isle of Atlantis, a story which has intrigued explorers for centuries despite being no more than a legend. Atlantis has been the subject of more than 500 books; and the search has been conducted in countries as varied as Sweden, Palestine, Central Asia, Carthage, Mexico, England, Spain, and Nigeria. Some take literally Plato's location of it as "near the pillars of Hercules" (the Straits of Gibraltar), although no sunken islands have been found in that vicinity. The newest adventurers are Russians who have been searching off the coast of Cornwall—known in Cornish myth as Lyonesse, a lost civilization to which King Arthur's knights retreated—and a British expedition which has been exploring Lake Poopo in the Bolivian Altiplano.

NOTING THAT it has been over 50 years since the death of Aleister Crowley, a writer in London's Sunday Telegraph concluded that the magician once tagged by the press as "the wickedest man in the world" was merely "part of a long line of magnificent British eccentrics." Crowley, son of a wealthy brewer, is best remembered for his expulsion from the secret society known as the Order of the Golden Dawn (author Arthur Machen and poet W. B. Yeats were fellow members) and his subsequent founding of his own occult group, *Astrum Argentum*, or Order of the Silver Star. An accomplished mountaineer, pro-

lific author, and artist whose paintings have sold for thousands of dollars, he was both admired and feared and was the villainous subject of W. Somerset Maugham's novel, *The Magician*. His final years were spent drug-addicted and poverty-stricken in a seaside boarding house, but since his death at age 72, wrote Thomas Kell, "his star is riding higher than ever in the firmament of celebrity." There are books about him as well as hundreds of pages on the Internet, his face appears on the cover of the Beatles' *Sergeant Pepper* album, and his old house overlooking Loch Ness was long ago acquired by the rock group Led Zeppelin.

BIRDS, BEASTS, BATS: Two 110-pound pigs escaped from a Wiltshire slaughterhouse, setting off a chase not only by authorities but representatives of the world's tabloid press, complete with helicopters. "These are obviously cunning and devious animals, and it appears to be a well-planned escape," remarked police spokesman Roger Bull. At the end of a 72-hour chase through the English countryside, the Daily Mail bought the recaptured beasts and announced that in deference to public sentiment they would be reprieved. A TV program about the drama was announced... Plans are afoot to install central heating in a cave in England's Cheddar Gorge to help preserve a colony of horseshoe bats, an endangered species... A new, unexpurgated edition of *Aesop's Fables* (Penguin Classics) has shocked many readers who were unaware that many of the moralistic tales in earlier editions had been sanitized. "Here is the animal kingdom revealed in its full monstrosity," wrote one critic, "almost totally lacking in any finer feelings."...Yuri Kuklachev, a Russian circus performer, is presenting much-loved ballets such as *Swan Lake* and *The Nutcracker* with a company of 120 well-trained cats, performing on their hind legs in tailor-made costumes.... "Bye, bye bustards" was the sad song English bird lovers heard last year on learning that the great bustard had died out. However, other species that have become extinct—the red kite, osprey and avocet—have successfully been reintroduced this century, so there is hope.

IN THE BORDER TOWN of Tijuana, Mexico's Day of the Dead is celebrated on November Eve, just as in the rest of the country, but guardians of ancient customs are worried that the American Halloween is making dangerous inroads. "We are trying to preserve our own traditions," says Leonardo Sarabia, "and there are fears that this region will denationalize and be left with a very Americanized culture." Sarabia's supporters are encouraging parents to take the family for a traditional Mexican cemetery picnic in which food is set out to invite the spirits to join the living, and at least one Tijuana school principal has abol-

ished Halloween parties. Both anniversaries are rooted in ancient death rites—Halloween from Samhain, the Celtic celebration in which wandering souls of the dead were feted, and the Day of the Dead which draws upon pre-Columbian death rites. Not everybody, however, is a stickler for one side or the other. "I think we can fuse the valuable origins of Halloween with our own tradition," says culture promoter Margarita Barba. "We are a border people. We can experience different cultures without losing our identity. Ideally, the United States would follow our lead and rescue Halloween from that commercialized, consumerist freak show that has degraded their own cultural traditions."

ABOUT ONE OUT OF every nine people are left-handed and many of them have found a welcoming home on the Internet which, as cyber columnist David Colker says, "has become a haven for minorities of all types who seek to share experiences." Sources for buying such lefty goods as potato peelers, scissors, golf clubs, and guitars are prevalent on the World Wide Web, but so are innumerable pages of information concerning famous left-handed figures (Julius Caesar, Joan of Arc, Napoleon, Fidel Castro, Albert Einstein, Bill Gates, Picasso, and Cole Porter). Four of the last five presidents—Clinton, Bush, Reagan, Ford—have been left-handed, and intrigued scientists are still trying to understand why. One Web page points out that not only has "left" acquired negative connotations (left-handed compliment, being out in left field) but that there was a period when a left-hander would be burned at the stake as a witch.

THREE THOUSAND YEARS after the death of Ramses II, childless peasant women arrive from all over Egypt to climb atop the forty-foot-long statue of the virile ruler. The great pharaoh is said to have had many wives who bore him a couple of hundred children, and today's supplicants presumably hope some of his magic can be passed along. "Rural women, unlike men, are cut off from religious life and unable to attend mosques or religious gatherings," explains Geraldine Pinch, a professor of Egyptology and author of *Magic In Ancient Egypt*. And Bojana Mojsov of the American Research Center in Cairo adds, "People have a natural admiration and are awe-inspired by the colossal statues. You feel humility in front of a stone that's been around for thousands of years. That's why people worshipped them. They are still alive among the people."

Gold Tree and Silver Tree

Once upon a time there was a king who had a wife, whose name was Silver Tree, and a daughter, whose name was Gold Tree. On a certain day of the days, Gold Tree and Silver Tree went to a glen, where there was a well, and in it there was a trout.

Said Silver Tree, "Troutie, bonny little fellow, am not I the most beautiful queen in the world?"

"Oh! indeed you are not."

"Who then?"

"Why, Gold Tree, your daughter."

Silver Tree went home, blind with rage. She lay down on her bed, and vowed she would never be well until she could get the heart and the liver of Gold Tree, her daughter, to eat.

At nightfall the king came home, and it was told him that Silver Tree, his wife, was very ill. He went where she was, and asked her what was wrong with her.

"Oh! only a thing which you may heal if you like."

"Oh! indeed there is nothing at all which I could do for you that I would not do."

"If I get the heart and the liver of Gold Tree, my daughter, to eat, I shall be well."

Now it happened about this time that the son of a great king had come from abroad to ask Gold Tree for marrying. The king now agreed to this, and they went abroad.

The king then went and sent his lads to the hunting-hill for a he-goat, and he gave its heart and its liver to his wife to eat; and she rose well and healthy.

A year after this Silver Tree went to the glen, where there was the well in which there was the trout.

"Troutie, bonny little fellow," said she, "am not I the most beautiful queen in the world?"

"Oh! indeed you are not."

"Who then?"

"Why, Gold Tree, your daughter."

"Oh! well, it is long since she was living. It is a year since I ate her heart and liver."

"Oh! indeed she is not dead. She is married to a great prince abroad."

Silver Tree went home, and begged the king to put the long-ship in order, and said, "I am going to see my dear Gold Tree, for it is so long since I saw her." The long-ship was put in order, and they went away.

It was Silver Tree herself that was at the helm, and she steered the ship so well that they were not long at all before they arrived.

The prince was out hunting on the hills. Gold Tree knew the long-ship of her father coming.

"Oh!" said she to the servants, "my mother is coming, and she will kill me."

"She shall not kill you at all; we will lock you in a room where she cannot get near you."

This is how it was done; and when Silver Tree came ashore, she began to cry out:

Illustrations by John D. Batten, 1892

"Come to meet your own mother, when she comes to see you." Gold Tree said that she could not, that she was locked in the room, and that she could not get out of it.

"Will you not put out," said Silver Tree, "your little finger through the keyhole, so that your own mother may give a kiss to it?"

She put out her little finger, and Silver Tree went and put a poisoned stab in it, and Gold Tree fell dead.

When the prince came home, and found Gold Tree dead, he was in great sorrow, and when he saw how beautiful she was, he did not bury her at all, but he locked her in a room where nobody would get near her.

In the course of time he married again, and the whole house was under the hand of this wife but one room, and he himself always kept the key of that room. On a certain day of the days he forgot to take the key with him, and the second wife got into the room. What did she see there but the most beautiful woman that she ever saw.

She began to turn and try to wake her, and she noticed the poisoned stab in her finger. She took the stab out, and Gold Tree rose alive, as beautiful as she was ever.

At the fall of night the prince came home from the hunting-hill, looking very downcast.

"What gift," said his wife, "would you give me that I could make you laugh?"

"Oh! indeed, nothing could make me laugh, except Gold Tree were to come alive again."

"Well, you'll find her alive down there in the room."

When the prince saw Gold Tree alive he made great rejoicings, and he began to kiss her, and kiss her, and kiss her. Said the second wife, "Since she is the first one you had it is better for you to stick to her, and I will go away."

"Oh! indeed you shall not go away, but I shall have both of you."

At the end of the year, Silver Tree went to the glen, where there was the well, in which there was the trout.

"Troutie, bonny little fellow," said she, "am not I the most beautiful queen in the world?"

"Oh! indeed you are not."

"Who then?"

"Why, Gold Tree, your daughter."

"Oh! well, she is not alive. It is a year since I put the poisoned stab into her finger."

"Oh! indeed she is not dead at all, at all."

Silver Tree went home, and begged the king to put the long-ship in order, for she was going to see her dear Gold Tree, as it was so long since she saw her. The long-ship was put in order, and they went away. It was Silver Tree herself that was at the helm, and she steered the ship so well that they were not long at all before they arrived.

The prince was out hunting on the hills. Gold Tree knew her father's ship coming.

"Oh!" said she, "my mother is coming, and she will kill me."

"Not at all," said the second wife; "we will go down to meet her."

Silver Tree came ashore. "Come down, Gold Tree, love," said she, "for your own mother has come to you with a precious drink."

"It is a custom in this country," said the second wife, "that the person who offers a drink takes a draught out of it first."

Silver Tree put her mouth to it, and the second wife went and struck it so that some of it went down her throat, and she fell dead. They had only to carry her home a dead corpse and bury her.

The prince and his two wives were long alive after this, pleased and peaceful.

I left them there.

This curious tale collected by Kenneth Macleod from a Gaelic-speaking storyteller in the Scottish Highlands and published in Celtic Magazine *so intrigued Joseph Jacobs, Britain's leading folklorist, that he included it in his* Celtic Fairy Tales, *London, 1892.*

Sea Prophecy

Seashells have been a source of magical inspiration since prehistoric time. The cowrie shell is revered as a mystical amulet in the Hispanic belief system known as Santería.

The practice of Santería (literally meaning *worship of saints*) is widespread throughout Latin America. It combines beliefs of the African Yoruba and Bantu linguistic tribes, influences of the native Indians of South America, and worship of the Roman Catholic saints. The *santero*, priest or priestess of Santería, acts as spiritual advisor, counselor, and physician to the community.

The Oracle

The *diloggun* is the Santería oracle of divination that utilizes seashells, or *caracoles*. The shell used is the shiny cowrie of the small gastropod *Cypraea moneta*. The shells are deeply revered as mouthpieces of the Santerían gods, the *orishas*.

The interpretation of the oracle is a holy rite and should never be attempted by the uninitiated. Santeros acquire their knowledge through years of focused, diligent study under the tutelage of an *oriate*, one adept in the oracle. Highly gifted santeros are said to be in closer contact to *aché*, the cosmic energy possessed by the orishas.

Because of the inherent intricacies of the oracle, querents should be confidant of the reputation of the santero working on their behalf as carelessness can lead to misinterpretation.

The Shells

The shells used in the oracle are purchased at the *botanica*, purveyor of religious goods. The shell is round on one side and on the other has a small serrated opening resembling a tiny mouth, through which the gods speak.

Cowrie, *Cyprea moneta*

The shells are prepared and consecrated before being used in ritual. A small indentation is made with a sharp file on the curved side of the shell to shape a rough opening. The tip of a scissor is inserted and the brittle shell is forced away to leave a round opening. This makes it possible for the shell to rest flat on any surface.

Each set of shells belongs to one specific deity. To complete the preparation of the shells, they are washed and consecrated to that one god. As depositories of great power, they will be treated with care and respect.

The Search

The consultation performed by the santero is called *registro*, literally meaning *to search*. The oracle is used to survey the life of the querent, uncovering problems and determining the best solutions. During an average search, the santero queries the oracle of the deity Eleggua, whose oracle is composed of 21 shells. All of the other gods of Santería have oracles consisting of 18 shells

The search is begun by the santero *bajar el caracol,* bringing down the shells. The ceremony is conducted on a straw mat, an *estera,* placed on the floor. The santero asks the querent to fold the fee for the search, the *derecho*, meaning right or right hand, into a small tight square, to bless himself with it and place it on the mat. The fee is usually minimal and is used by the santero to purchase magical supplies. The santero then purifies his hands by rubbing powdered seashell over them. Dipping a finger into a vessel of water, he allows a few drops to fall to the floor, and prays in Yoruban to the deity Eleggua.

The santero gathers the shells in the middle of the mat, positioning the fee at the top. He proceeds to *moyubar*, to pray in a mixture of Spanish and Yoruban. Gathering the shells in his right hand, he touches them to the forehead, shoulders, and hands of the querent. He takes the *mano*, the hand consisting of 21 shells, and sets five aside. These shells will not be considered in the reading. The remaining 16 shells are cast onto the mat.

The patterns revealed are interpreted by counting the shells that have landed with the serrated mouth facing up. The various patterns are called *oddus*.

The shells are cast twice, yielding two patterns. Both are considered with more emphasis on the first. Each pattern is associated with an accompanying proverb and several *patakis*, or legends. The proverb is a single line of wisdom, and the legends are short stories having moral overtones.

The Nature of the Obstacle

After the problem is revealed, the santero then inquires as to the exact nature of the obstacle. He determines whether it is spiritual or material, and whether the oddu comes with good

luck or protection, *iré*, or bad luck, *osogbo*.

He accomplishes this by the *igbo* ritual. The igbo uses talismans such as a small black stone, a large round seed, a small doll's head, a long seashell, or a bone. When utilizing the igbo ritual, the santero must ask questions in a way that will yield yes or no answers. Each talisman carries either negative or positive significance.

The santero hands the querent two of the talismans while simultaneously casting the shells. Meanwhile, the querent shakes the pieces in his hands, allowing each one to fall into a different hand. He then presents them, closefisted, to the santero. Depending on the pattern revealed by the shells, the santero will ask to see one hand, enabling him to determine the nature of the luck, by the positive or negative significance of the talisman held in the querent's hand.

With the Help of the Deities

The santero now asks if any of the deities will aid the querent, known as *lariche*. He accomplishes this by using the igbo ritual by process of elimination.

Speaking through the igbo ritual, the aiding god or gods reveal the remedy prescribed for resolution of the dilemma. Remedies can be as simple as flower or fruit offerings and herbal preparations, or as complex as special cleansing rituals or intricate, rare offerings to the gods. Small gifts will be given regardless of other prescribed offerings in gratitude for the help of the deities.

With the ritual completed and the remedy in place, the querent inevitably leaves the santero feeling relieved and reassured. And if the deities have been generous, the problem is certain to be resolved, as anything is possible with the help of the gods of Santería.

—KERRY CUDMORE

Illustrations by Thomas Hope, 1812

OSTIA ANTICA

Less than an hour's ride on the Metro from Rome, the ancient seaport of Ostia Antica will keep you fascinated until it closes an hour before sunset. Take along food and drink because there is none at the site, and you'll enjoy having lunch with a fallen marble column as your picnic table. Ostia is among the best preserved of all ancient Roman cities, largely because the once-bustling port gradually declined into a rural backwater and was eventually covered by sand and forgotten for centuries. The coastline silted up so persistently over the years that now the sea is nearly two miles away, lapping the beaches of present-day Ostia which is another place altogether.

Ostia Antica is truly fascinating: there are hundreds of acres of roofless buildings, palaces, temples, tavernas, and a wonderfully preserved amphitheater that is still in use today for the occasional summer concert or dramatic performance. The earliest town wall went up in 335 B.C. with a military colony deployed beside the sea to guard the coast where two centuries earlier Ancus Martius, the fourth king of Rome, had established a colony to exploit the salt pits. Sitting at the mouth of the Tiber, it was the first landfall for all the treasures bound for Rome from the far-flung corners of the empire. The shipping business was an especially lucrative one with its importers and exporters, timber merchants and boat builders, sail and rope makers.

Behind the theater is the square of the corporations, the *Piazzale delle Corporazioni*, their ancient signs still clearly preserved in black and white tiles along with pictures of galleons in full sail and the elephant trademark of an importer from Africa. Favorite goddesses of merchants and navigators—Fortune, Ceres, Spes, and Venus—all had temples between this business section and the Tiber, which ran right by the square in those days but has since changed its course. It is not difficult to picture the tycoons leaning from their windows on that exciting day in 45 B.C. when Cleopatra's regal barge

Jupiter Juno Minerva

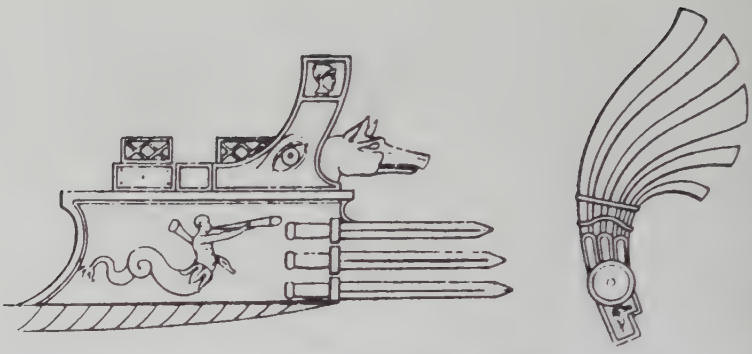
THE CAPITOLINE TRIAD

passed by, heading upriver for her rendezvous with Julius Caesar in Rome.

From the beginning, the constant silting up of the river caused a problem for commerce, and in the 1st century A.D., both Claudius (41-54) and later Trajan (98-117) had to instigate extensive dredging. Nonetheless, Ostia continued to flourish as the major port at which the grain was unloaded from Africa. The *mensores frumentarii* controlled the grain trade, storing vast supplies in huge warehouses from which it was often distributed free as a corn dole (*annona*) to calm social unrest. One of the temples, in fact, was dedicated to Fortuna Annonaria, literally, "goddess of good fortune in provisions," whose well-preserved statue sits on a street of that name leading to the vast forum. Here at the top of wide stairs is the *Capitolium*, a temple devoted to the divine trio of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, the triad which formed the main cult of the state of Rome and was represented in all Roman colonies as the supreme combination of power, wisdom, and protection of the practical and aesthetic arts.

Ostia was one of the last strongholds of paganism, its temple to Hercules restored as late as the 4th century, long after Christianity had become the official state religion. Major cults celebrated locally included one to the Dioscuri (Castor and Pollux, twin sons of Zeus and Leda) who were considered protectors of navigation. It was to this temple on January 27, 359 that the prefect and consuls came on foot from Rome to invoke the end of a great storm which had prevented grain-laden ships from entering the harbor.

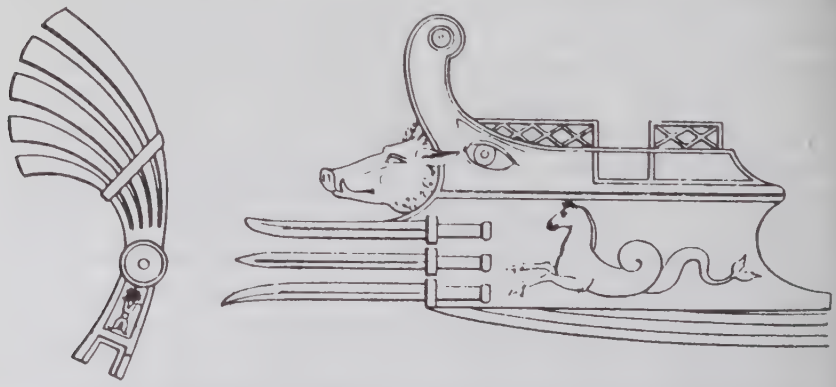
An international port, Ostia understandably adopted many oriental cults such as those worshipping Mithras and Magna Mater (Cybele), the goddess of fertility, whose temple was at the edge of town near the Laurentine Gate. Atys, the celebrated shepherd who was entrusted by Cybele with the care of her temple, is represented with a shrine here; and there are temples to Spes and to Bellona, the goddess of war whose priests celebrated her cult with orgiastic rites. Bellona, usually depicted with the whip used to stir up enthusiasm for battle, was greatly venerated by the legions as was the Persian sun god Mithras whose temples can be found in many parts of the ancient seaport. A mystic aspect of Mithraism is portrayed by the killing of a bull, representing the victory of good over evil, a



theme depicted in various murals and a statue in the on-site museum.

All the city's cults were supervised by the *pontifex Vulcani*, the priest of Vulcan, chosen for life from among the most eminent citizens. As the city's supreme religious authority, it was his job to authorize the building of temples and dedication of altars or statues. Vulcan, a minor god of the Roman pantheon elsewhere, assumed major importance in Ostia due to the antiquity of his worship. The emperor Augustus provoked the earliest of the imperial cults, but there were temples built for and by emperors as well as shrines to protect the gods who watched over the emperors. Imperial worship sometimes carried over to the wives of rulers: statues in the on-site museum include Hadrian's wife Sabina and Septimius Severus' wife Julia Domna, both depicted as the grain goddess Ceres. The biggest temples of all were those at either end of the vast forum—the *Capitolium*, with steps as impressive as those in any 20th-century capital city, and the Temple of Rome and Augustus built by Tiberius.

By the late 2nd century Ostia's population exceeded 50,000. But the harbor continued to silt up inexorably, creating new land between the town and the sea. A new port was built further up the coast; and gradually the lifeblood of Ostia began to ebb away, later hastened by pirate raids and malaria from the untended and expanding



Prows of Roman galleys, armed with rostrums, and plustrums or ornaments of the stern

BACCHANALIAN PROCESSION

marshes. After the 4th century it was deserted and forgotten, covered over with the sand that kept it hidden until modern times—which is happily why it has remained so unchanged.

A stroll down the main street, *Decumanus Maximus*, paved with huge, flat-topped boulders is a superlative time-trip for today's visitors. It is not hard to visualize the scurrying figures who once thronged this roughly-paved thoroughfare, passing in and out of these very same stores and offices whose empty shells still line each side. Here and there a pillar still stands, or the counter and shelves of a tavern which dispensed sausages and hot wine with honey, or the stone ovens of a bakery. The mosaic of a fish indicates what was sold in one store; black and white tiles depicting wrestlers identify an athletic academy. The large amphitheater with three thousand seats is virtually intact, the backstage niches empty, yet in the imagination easily refilled with the statues seen on so many street corners.

Behind the forum were the big public baths, not too far from the well-preserved *Casa dī Diana*, a three-story block of flats with its own bathhouse and a central courtyard and fountain just around the corner from the bakery.

In those days, the daily meeting place for all the men was the public baths, and the extensive ruins of the Baths of Neptune are especially well preserved with mosaics of the sea god surrounded by fabulous sea creatures and a depiction of Neptune's wife, Amphitrite.

For anybody with even the slightest interest in antiquity it is hard to exaggerate the tranquil charm of Ostia Antica which is beautiful, inspiring and—compared to better-known sites—virtually unvisited. There are no crowds, and even if there were they would quickly dissipate in the sheer vastness of this magical place.

YEAR OF THE HARE

February 16, 1999 to February 4, 2000

After the chaos attending a Tiger Year, it is pure joy to welcome a Year of the Hare, an animal highly regarded in the Orient. The Buddha rewarded the hare with a place on the Moon, for it is said the creature leaped into a fire to save the holy man from starvation. The Chinese look to the Full Moon following the New Year celebration to find the Lunar Hare's image. According to legend, there he sits under an acacia tree and pounds sacred herbs in a mortar to create the magical elixir of life.

A Year of the Hare heralds a tranquil period of time. Drawing essence from the Moon, a certain air of detachment and discretion will prevail.

Chinese astrological years run in cycles of twelve, each governed by a symbolic creature. If you were born on or after the Aquarian New Moon in one of the following years, your destiny is entwined with the hare. In this, the ninth Hare Year of the 20th century, you'll find appreciation for your grace and refinement, experience contentment, and enjoy an added measure of good fortune.

1903 1915 1927 1939 1951 1963 1975 1987 1999

The MOON *Calendar*

is divided into zodiac signs rather than the more familiar Gregorian calendar.

1999 2000

Bear in mind that new projects should be initiated when the Moon is waxing (from dark to full); when the Moon is on the wane (from full to dark), it is a time for storing energy and the wise person waits.

Please note that Moons are listed by day of entry into each sign. Quarters are marked, but as rising and setting times vary from one region to another, it is advisable to check your local newspaper, library or planetarium.

The Moon's Place is computed for Eastern Standard Time.

The Pied Piper of Hameln

The Pied Piper of Hameln did actually exist although his visit to the little town in northwest Germany happened centuries ago, details are a little vague. Essentially, the tale is of a town that hired a flute-playing ratcatcher to rid the place of vermin and then declined to pay his fee. In revenge, the legend goes, the Piper returned to lure away the local childen with his siren song.

The Brothers Grimm, Goethe and Robert Browning have all immortalized the story which is depicted in a series of frescoes on the walls of a 16th-century house in Hameln. Every Sunday between mid-May and mid-September the legend is re-enacted on the outdoor terrace of the Hochzeithaus, a 380-year-old festival hall, with locals garbed in historical costumes playing the parts of councillors, citizens, children and rats.

Hameln was founded on the banks of the River Weser near the site of a 9th-century Benedictine abbey and was an important market town by the time the Pied Piper was hired to get rid of the rats which plagued the numerous grain mills. On the Piper's fatal return trip he supposedly enchanted 130 children with his playing, leading them to a hill south of town into which they disappeared forever.

The tale, known throughout the world, has been translated into dozens of languages and is even taught in the curriculum of some schools. According to legend, on the Piper's return wearing "a wondrous red hat," he sounded his pipe when most people were in church and all the children ran out to follow him. Only two children survived: one who was blind, the other a little boy who ran back to fetch his coat and was left behind.

Many theories have arisen to explain the story, some suggesting that the childen were caught up in some ecstatic dance: some regions at that period of history were afflicted by a kind of medieval "disco fever" although this idea is given less credence than the theory that the children of Hameln were young people who left town at the behest of agents seeking colonists for Transylvania. The Exodus of the Children of Hameln was first documented by a local ecclesiastic in 1384—but he didn't mention any ratcatcher. That apparently attached itself to the legend later.

At any rate, residents trade heavily on the tale today. A Pied Piper greets visitors with music and poetry, conducting them through the ancient streets. An enchanting carillon, a chime of bells with moving clockwork figures, marks the passing hours as it retells the story that brought fame to the tiny German town.

♈ aries

March 21- April 20

Mars

Cardinal Sign of Fire

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
Mar. 21 *Spring is here* Taurus	22 *A green wind blows* Gemini	23 *Look to the future*	24 Cancer	25 *Planting time*	26	27 *Delay all action* Leo
28 *Spread your wings*	29 *Follow your own path* Virgo	30 *Heed a warning*	31 seed moon Libra	Apr. 1 WANING All Fools' Day	2	3 *Onward and upward* Scorpio
4 Daylight saving begins	5 *Tribute to Cybele* Sagittarius	6	7 Hilaria Day of Joy	8 Capricorn	9	10 *See no evil* Aquarius
11	12 *Talk to the trees*	13 *Thomas Jefferson born, 1743* Pisces	14	15 *Courage and patience* Aries	16	17 WAXING Taurus
18 *Enjoy a challenge*	19 *Meet at Moonset*	20 *Jessica Lange born, 1949* Gemini				

THE GREEN MAN

An intimate involvement with nature is central to the life of the witch. Mother Nature is a familiar symbol personifying the goddess in her role as Earth Spirit. Scientists have expressed the same idea in the Gaia hypothesis suggesting that our planet is a single living organism. Recently there has been a reawakening of Mother Nature's male counterpart—the Green Man, a potent figure illustrating a unity between humanity and the plant world.

The origins of the Green Man are ancient. We first meet him over 5000 years ago in the Neolithic art of central Europe. His is a very masculine face thrusting forth from a wreath of foliage, the vegetation curling to become his hair and beard. Green Man images in Celtic art predate Rome's conquest of Gaul. Masks of the Green Man appear in Roman sculpture and architectural detail during the 1st century A.D. In Romanesque, Gothic, and Renaissance art the Green Man appears again and again. He gazes from the extraordinary carvings and paintings in great cathedrals and decorates the pages of illuminated manuscripts. In a later and lighter vein, many 18th-century English inns were named for him and their hanging signs portrayed him.

Evidence is not only visual. Euripides presents an ancestor of the Green Man as a form of Dionysus in *The Bacchae*. Ovid, in *Metamorphosis*, introduces a plant spirit inhabiting a man's body as Vertumnus, god of autumn fruits. In the Arthurian legends we meet him in the tale of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. Folk hero Robin Hood, Shakespeare's Herne the Hunter in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Tolkein's Ents, the talking trees of Oz all echo the Green Man theme. Composers too, have invoked his spirit. He comes to us in the music of Wagner, the Pastorale Symphony of Vaughan Williams, and in a wealth of folk songs.

Welcome the Green Man as an emblem of our unity with nature.

— DIKKI-JO MULLEN

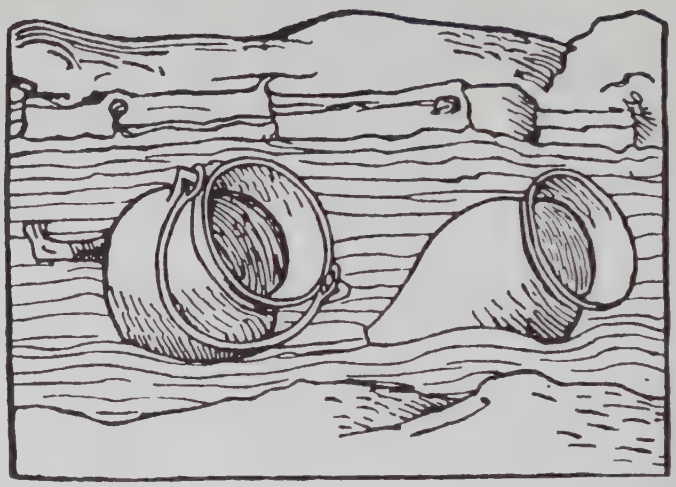
taurus

April 21- May 21

Venus

Fixed Sign of Earth

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			Apr. 21 *Repay kindness* Cancer	22	23 Leo	24 *Strive for clarity*
25 *Ward off blight* Virgo	26	27 *Renew psychic power* Libra	28 Floralia	29 *Daniel Day-Lewis born, 1957*	30 hare moon Roodmas Eve Scorpio	May 1 BELTANE WANING
2	3 *Watch and wait* Sagittarius	4	5 *Empress Eugenie born, 1826* Capricorn	6 *Walk a maze*	7 *Carry an amulet*	8 Aquarius
9 Lemuria	10 *Perform proper ceremony* Pisces	11 *Retain strict control*	12 Aries	13 *Drift with the tide*	14 *Dig and dream* Taurus	15
16 WAXING Gemini	17 *Dismiss care*	18 Cancer	19 *Keep an open mind*	20 *Nature provides comfort* Leo	21	



Aesop's Fables Ulm, 1476

The Two Pots

A RIVER carried down its stream two Pots, one made of earthenware, and the other of brass. The Earthen Pot said to the Brass Pot, "Pray keep at a distance, and do not come near me: for if you touch me ever so slightly, I shall be broken in pieces; and besides, I by no means wish to come near you."

MORAL: Equals make the best friends.

From AESOP'S FABLES, literally translated from the Greek by George Fyler Townsend, London, 1890.

II gemini May 22- June 21

Mercury *Mutable Sign of Air*

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						May 22 Virgo
23 *Sing before breakfast*	24	25 *Plant flowers and vines* Libra	26 *Helena Bonham-Carter born, 1966*	27 *Charm a stranger* Scorpio	28	29 Oak Apple Day
30 dyad moon Sagittarius	31 WANING	June 1 *A loss is a gain* Capricorn	2 *Lucky day for all*	3	4 *Enjoy a day of solitude* Aquarius	5 Night of the Watchers
6 *Shun danger* Pisces	7	8 *Buy without bargaining*	9 *Weed and prune* Aries	10 *Clear the channel*	11 Taurus	12 *Divine the future*
13 Gemini	14 WAXING	15 Cancer	16 *Ritual awakens perception*	17 *Find the lost Moon* Leo	18 *Paul McCartney born, 1942*	19 *Seek the wild herbs* Virgo
20	21 SUMMER SOLSTICE Libra					

MAGIC SQUARE OF THE MOON

37	78	29	70	21	62	13	54	5
6	38	79	30	71	22	63	14	46
47	7	39	80	31	72	23	55	15
16	48	8	40	81	32	64	24	56
57	17	49	9	41	73	33	65	25
26	58	18	50	1	42	74	34	66
67	27	59	10	51	2	43	75	35
36	68	19	60	11	52	3	44	76
77	28	69	20	61	12	53	4	45

Talisman: Magic Square of the Moon

Inscribe on parchment, use during conjuration of the spirit.

A magic square is an arrangement of numbers, none alike, placed in the form of a square where every row, column, and the two diagonals add up to the same sum. Of great antiquity, these devices were often engraved on metal or stone and worn as talismans. The renowned adept of ceremonial magic Cornelius Agrippa (1486-1535) constructed this magic square of the Moon.

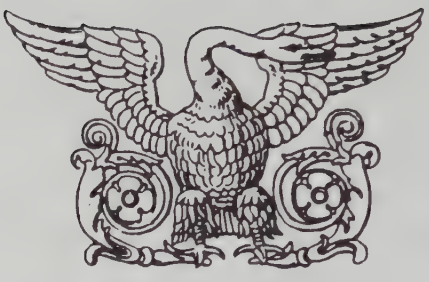
When you're feeling angry or depressed, a brisk walk can often ease the tension. Mental exercise can turn the trick as well. Add each of nine columns vertically, horizontally and diagonally in your head without resorting to pencil and paper. The total of each column is 369.

Making a talisman of this Magic Square of the 9th Order will calm and discipline your mind for psychic work at the Dark-of-the-Moon. Patiently place the numbers in numerical order from 1 to 81 in their correct positions on heavy white paper in black ink. You'll discover a series of patterns as you work which are fascinating in themselves.

♋ cancer June 22- July 23

Moon *Cardinal Sign of Water*

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		June 22 *Walk in the woods* Libra	23 *Follow an old tradition*	24 St. John's Day Scorpio	25	26 *Wear or carry silver* Sagittarius
27 *Draw down the Moon*	28 mead moon Capricorn	29 WANING	30 *Consider the source*	July 1 Aquarius	2 *An ill wind blows*	3 *Danger lurks* Pisces
4 *Geraldo Rivera born, 1943*	5	6 Aries	7	8 *Drop a token in the sea* Taurus	9 *Never assume*	10 *Make no judgement* Gemini
11 *Find the flaw*	12 Cancer	13 WAXING	14 *Seek knowledge* Leo	15	16 *Ginger Rogers born, 1911* Virgo	17 *Live in hope*
18 Libra	19 *Follow your heart*	20	21 *Dismiss doubt* Scorpio	22	23 *Life is a banquet*	



MYTHIC SWANS

Zeus, sky god of the Greeks, chose the guise of a swan in order to seduce Leda, queen of twilight. Their coupling produced two eggs. From the first came Castor and Pollux, the heavenly twins, and the second held Clytemnestra and the ill-omened Helen of Troy. Some scholars say Leda's spouse Tyndareus fathered one set of twins, but authorities differ over which egg was which. The famous myth inspired a host of painters, especially during the Italian Renaissance, and most major museums display a version of Leda and the Swan. The poet Yeats was moved to write a superb account of the seduction: *"A sudden blow: the great wings beating still above the staggering girl ..."*

The swans of northern Europe differ from the carnal nature of the Mediterranean myth. These are ethereal, mystical creatures, as in the tragic Celtic tale *The Children of Lir*, or the swans that assume human form like those immortalized by Tschaikowsky's brilliant score for the ballet *Swan Lake*. All the myths appear to share the theme of transformation.

But the most intriguing swan myth concerns transition and is found in Finland's ancient epic poem, the *Kalevala*. Sibelius, the great Finnish composer, reflects the atmosphere of that runic legend in his hauntingly beautiful tone poem, *Swan of Tuonela*. Tuonela, the land of death, is a dark underground kingdom ringed by a black river upon which glides a majestic swan singing a plaintive melody. The swan is the spirit guide as the soul passes from one place to another. Whoever hears this sad song must leave the reality of this world and venture into a strange, unknown land.

Aubrey Beardsley

♌ leo

July 24- August 23

Sun

Fixed Sign of Fire

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						July 24 *Drive a hard bargain* Sagittarius
25 *Refresh with music*	26 *Gypsies gather* Capricorn	27 *Cherish the moment*	28 wort moon Lunar eclipse Aquarius	29 WANING	30 *Avoid stress*	31 Lughnassad Eve Pisces
Aug. 1 LAMMAS	2 *Exchange ideas* Aries	3	4 Taurus	5 *Learn the secret of the winds*	6 *Lucille Ball born, 1911* Gemini	7 *Gain an advantage*
8 *Maintain your poise* Cancer	9	10 *Make amends* Leo	11 Total solar eclipse	12 WAXING	13 Diana's Day Virgo	14 *Remove an obstacle*
15 *Try even harder* Libra	16 *Keep the channels open*	17 Scorpio	18	19 *Bill Clinton born 1946*	20 *Take swift action*	21 *Be not reckless*
22	23 *Wear an amulet* Capricorn					

THE NINTH KEY

The Hermit, from the *Ancien Tarot de Marseilles*, considered to be the purest and possibly the oldest deck of divinatory cards.

The lantern, the cloak and the staff are the three symbols of initiation. They are needed to guide souls past the temptation of illusory fires by the roadside, so that they may go straight to the higher goal.

— P.D. OUSPENSKY, *The Symbolism of the Tarot*, 1913

♍ virgo

August 24–September 23

Mercury

Mutable Sign of Earth

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		Aug. 24 *Aubrey Beardsley born, 1872* Aquarius	25	26 barley moon Pisces	27 WANING	28 *Be precise*
29 Day of Thoth Aries	30 *Begin a daily journal*	31 Taurus	Sept. 1 *Express an opinion*	2 Gemini	3 *Kitty Carlisle born, 1914*	4 *Faithful forever* Cancer
5 *Day of a clown*	6 *Make a circle of pine*	7 *A day to remember* Leo	8 *Prepare for a journey*	9 Virgo	10 WAXING	11 *Discern primary truth* Libra
12 *Refute a rumor*	13	14 *Gather fallen feathers* Scorpio	15 *There is but one of you in all of time*	16 *Truth above all* Sagittarius	17	18 *Strike a balance*
19 *Spend today alone* Capricorn	20 *Be cheerful while alive*	21 *Smooth the path* Aquarius	22	23 Autumnal Equinox Pisces		

THE UBIQUITOUS NINE

The number nine turns up in the lore and legends of many lands. Ancient Egyptians separated their deities into companies of nine members, for that number represented completeness. The Greeks, devoted to poetry, sought inspiration from Nine Muses. The divinely inspired Homer relates: "For nine days did holy Demeter perambulate the earth and when the ninth shining morn had come, Hecate met her, bringing news." The mathematician Pythagoras regarded the number nine as sacred, "the extent to which numbers would go, all others being embraced and revolving around it." Romans celebrated the holiday of Lemuria by scattering black beans and saying nine times: "These I cast to redeem me and mine." The folklore of Cornwall requires a bouquet of "nine sorts of herbs" to be tossed on the Midsummer Eve bonfire. And Shakespeare's witches in *Macbeth* chant: "Thrice to thine and thrice to mine and thrice again, to make up nine."

The number nine also is woven into visual patterns, as shown above in the familiar Shri-Yantra. Hindu-Vedic tradition uses art as a tool in the practice of meditation. The graphic image is called a *mandala*, from the Sanskrit word meaning circle, or a *yantra* when the design is purely geometrical. Its purpose is to provide a focal point of concentration to help clear the mind of clutter. The Shri-Yantra is composed of nine linked triangles—an abstract expression of the union of opposites. Relevance to life on earth may be interpreted on several levels. In the design's simplest form the triangles pointing upward represent the power of Shiva, the principal male divinity, and the triangles pointing downward hold the female energy of the goddess Shakti. The apparent tension between the two is reconciled into one complete whole. The mystic number nine forms a cosmic diagram.

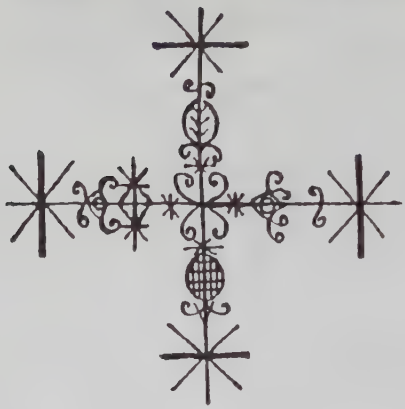
libra

September 24- October 23

Venus

Cardinal Sign of Air

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					Sept. 24 *Invite adventure* Pisces	25 wine moon Aries
26 WANING	27 *Pay your debts*	28 *Greet Venus at dawn* Taurus	29	30 *Martina Hingis born, 1980* Gemini	Oct. 1 *Grace under stress*	2 Cancer
3 *Spend today alone*	4 Leo	5 *Await the waxing Moon*	6 Virgo	7 *John Mellen-camp born, 1951*	8 *Observe the birds of the air*	9 Libra
10 WAXING	11 Scorpio	12 *Redeem a virtue*	13 Sagittarius	14 *Satisfy a longing*	15	16 *Reach an agreement* Capricorn
17	18 *Meet a challenge* Aquarius	19 *Restore honor*	20 *Plan a candle spell*	21 Pisces	22 *Triumph over enemy*	23 *Walk on the wild side* Aries



VOODOO MESSENGER

The *vèvè* (vev-vay) is a sacred element always present in a Voodoo ritual, a magical design representing astral forces. The drawing would be incised on a carefully swept earthen floor, the lines filled in with cornmeal. The design is made to summon a particular god or goddess, known collectively as *loas*, and serves as the prelude to a spiritual ceremony.

The symbol above belongs to the quicksilver god Simbi, a *loa* of many forms. He has been called the Voodoo Mercury, the quickening force of the great god Legba, who symbolizes the Sun and is the essential center of the Haitian belief system. Simbi is the Sun's messenger, with the power to confer the ability needed to successfully accomplish a difficult task. Milo Rigaud, author of the definitive *Secrets of Voodoo*, equates Simbi with the archetypal Thoth-Hermes-Mercury as the one "who leads the dead in all directions bordered by the four magic orients of the cross." In the vaster and more flexible world of the spirit, Simbi guides us from the visible to the invisible. The journey begins at the crossroads.

Spirit in the wood make the blood
run fast,
Spirit in the wood make the beauty last,
Keep the hope alive while the youth
go past,
Aye, Simbi l'eau. Aye, Simbi l'eau.

The chant is actually the lyric of a song popularized here by an Afro-Cuban band in the late thirties. The melody and words, accompanied only by an insistent drum beat, were unique and captured the imagination. It may well have been based on a genuine prayer to the fiery young god who wrought miracles.

Horse and Rider Yoruba, Nigeria

♏ scorpio October 24-November 22

Pluto

Fixed Sign of Water

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
Oct. 24 blood moon Taurus	25 WANING	26 *Hillary Rodham Clinton born, 1947*	27 Gemini	28 *Hail bright Jupiter*	29 Cancer	30 *Set clocks back one hour tonight*
31 Halloween Leo	Nov. 1 HALLOW-MAS Samhain	2 *Pay heed to intuition* Virgo	3	4 *Leave revenge to the weak*	5 *Forgive and forget* Libra	6 *Your gift is a precious one*
7 Scorpio	8 WAXING	9 *Resolve a problem*	10 *Follow your own star* Sagittarius	11	12 *Winds of change blow* Capricorn	13 *Peace comes at last*
14 *Laughter refreshes*	15 Aquarius	16 Hecate Night	17 *Keep moving on* Pisces	18	19 *Remember the Elder's gifts* Aries	20 *A white wind blows*
21 *A promise of joy* Taurus	22 *Boris Becker born, 1967*					

Storm at sea René Quillivic, 1892

A Cornish Witch Tale

Madgy Figgy of Raftra was a Cornish witch of renown. Stories about her persist to the present day, and this event occurred early in her career.

One stormy night Madgy and a band of wreckers lured a Portuguese ship to its doom on the rocks in Perloe Cove. All the passengers and crew were drowned. When their bodies washed ashore, the wreckers began to strip them of their valuables. Madgy, upon examining the corpse of one richly dressed and bejewelled lady, cried out that all the booty of the night's adventure must be immediately gathered and placed in a chest in the Figgy cottage. The wreckers grumbled but finally bowed to Madgy's indomitable will. As they buried the bodies of their victims, an eerie ball of light appeared and hovered over the grave of the lady who had captured Madgy's attention. Madgy nodded wisely and calmed the terror of her companions as the light followed them along the coast finally shining on the chest where the loot was stored. Every night thereafter the light shone first on the lady's grave, and then moved slowly along the seashore to rest on the treasure chest in the cottage.

Three months passed, and a swarthy elegantly dressed gentleman appeared at Madgy's door. By signs, for he spoke no English, the stranger communicated his mission to Madgy's husband. After visiting the grave the gentleman returned to the Figgy cottage, drawn by the glow of the strange light which now flickered above the chest. Weeping, the visitor collected from the chest only the gems worn by the lady and rewarded the wreckers with the rest of the treasures. Then, without ado, the dark stranger left as mysteriously as he had come. Madgy Figgy, dividing up the booty remarked, "One witch knows another, dead or living. That African would have been the death of us if we hadn't kept the treasure, whereas now we have good gifts, and no gainsaying 'em."

sagittarius November 23-December 21

Jupiter

Mutable Sign of Fire

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		Nov. 23 snow moon Gemini	24 WANING	25 Cancer	26 *Tina Turner born, 1938*	27 *Don't resist a change*
28 *Avoid a trap* Leo	29	30 *Shift a pattern* Virgo	Dec. 1	2 *Comfort a lost soul* Libra	3 *Weave a spell*	4 *Work and hope* Scorpio
5 *The mask is off*	6 *Carry a talisman*	7 Sagittarius	8 WAXING	9 *Renew a vow* Capricorn	10	11 *Tumult and silence*
12 Aquarius	13 *Hypocrites pay a price*	14 *Tycho Brahe born, 1546* Pisces	15	16 *Review the past* Aries	17 Saturnalia	18 *Let music lift your spirit* Taurus
19 *Make a close call*	20 *Spin a tall tale* Gemini	21 Eve of Yule				

THE IRISH TRIADS

Ninth-century Irish monks fleeing the Viking terror found sanctuary in continental monasteries, but undoubtedly felt the pain of exile. Evidence that a longing for home occasionally seized the priests is preserved in their beautifully rendered Latin manuscripts, now Church treasures. Often in the margins of the vellum masterworks are found fragments of Old-Irish thought jotted down in Gaelic, clearly remnants from an earlier oral tradition.

Kuno Meyer, German scholar and philologist, collected and translated the marginal notes and presented The Triads in a 1906 lecture series to the Royal Irish Academy.

Three signs of ill-breeding: a long visit, staring, constant questioning.

Three candles that illume every darkness: truth, nature, knowledge.

The three great ends of knowledge: duty, utility, decorum.

Three things that corrupt the world: pride, superfluity, indolence.

Three things that come unbidden: fear, jealousy, love.

Three keys that unlock thoughts: drunkenness, trustfulness, love.

Three sisters of youth: desire, beauty, generosity.

Three sparks that kindle love: a face, demeanor, speech.

Three laughing-stocks of the world: an angry man, a jealous man, a niggard.

Three excellences of dress: elegance, comfort, lastingness.

Three signs of a rogue: bitterness, hatred, cowardice.

♑ capricorn December 22- January 20

Saturn *Cardinal Sign of Earth*

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		WINTER SOLSTICE	Dec. 22 oak moon Cancer	23 WANING	24 Leo	25 *Your character is your fate*
26 *Scorn arrogant ignorance*	27 Virgo	28 *Shift routine actions*	29 Libra	30	31 *Henri Matisse born, 1869*	Jan. 1 2000 Scorpio
2 *Consider many alternatives*	3 *Find a hidden path* Sagittarius	4	5 *Ride out the storm* Capricorn	6	7 WAXING	8 *Venture without delay* Aquarius
9 Feast of Janus	10 *Sharpen your wits* Pisces	11 *Silence has no pitfalls*	12	13 *Trust common sense* Aries	14	15 *Whistle up the wind* Taurus
16 *Sade Adu born, 1959*	17 *Spirits rise higher* Gemini	18 *Enjoy quiet time*	19 *Scry for an omen* Cancer	20 wolf moon		

Saint Valentine's Day

Two Christian martyrs, both called Valentine, gave the holiday its name. They died during the 3rd century A.D. several years apart, but apparently on the same day. Later, the Roman Catholic Church would declare them saints and assign February 14th as their name day. Neither saint is in any way associated with romantic love, for that link with the date had been long established.

Throughout pagan Europe a common belief held that birds chose their mates in mid-February. The earliest literary reference is in Chaucer's *Assembly of Fowls*: "For this was on Saint Valentine's Day, / When ev'ry fowl cometh to choose her mate." Taking a cue from the birds, it became the custom in medieval times for lovers to exchange greetings and gifts on that special day in early springtime.

Preparing and sharing food is one way to celebrate a romantic holiday. Love thrives on happy memories and taste is a sensation long remembered. For your delectation, we've chosen a dessert from *Love Feasts* by our own culinary adept, Christine Fox.

APPLE-CINNAMON RICE PUDDING

1/2 cup long-grain rice
1/4 cup apple juice
2 tablespoons sugar
1/4 cup canned evaporated milk
1/2 cup milk
1/4 teaspoon ginger
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 cup unsweetened applesauce
1/4 cup raisins

Spray two individual baking cups or ramekins with non-stick cooking spray. Place all ingredients into a bowl and stir. Fill cups, cover and bake in a 350-degree oven for 1 hour. Serve warm or cold. It's delicious either way.

aquarius

January 21-February 19

Uranus

Fixed Sign of Air

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					Jan. 21 WANING *The best gift of all* Leo	22 *Work creates joy*
23 *Spirit is the true self* Virgo	24	25 *Life is a challenge*	26 Libra	27 *Keep wits about you*	28 Scorpio	29 *Join together at owl time*
30 *Prepare candles* Sagittarius	31 *Tallulah Bankhead born, 1902*	Feb. 1 Oimelc Eve	2 CANDLE-MAS Capricorn	3 *Avoid mischief*	4 Aquarius	5 Year of the Dragon Partial solar eclipse
6 WAXING	7 *Clear away debris* Pisces	8	9 *Fortune favors the brave* Aries	10 *Seize the day*	11 *Drop a burden*	12 Taurus
13 *Act with decision*	14 *Discard the useless* Gemini	15	16 *John McEnroe born, 1959* Cancer	17 *Free your soul*	18 *Trust in nature* Leo	19 storm moon

INSTANT RECALL

When an ancient Greek scratched his head and tried to recall something elusive, he invoked Mnemosyne, the Goddess of Memory. She was a Titaness, one of the large results of a union between Heaven (Uranus) and Earth (Gaia). Mnemosyne herself was a notable mother. When she lay nine nights with the ever-amorous Zeus, she gave birth to the Nine Muses—the lovely sisters that inspire arts and science.

Sometimes the goddess is fickle and refuses to yield the memory we seek. In order to outwit her, a number of devices have evolved called, in her honor, "mnemonics."

Some are generally familiar. When it's time to reset clocks, we remember the ever-popular spring forward, fall back. For spelling, it's I before E except after C, or when sounded as "ay" as in "neighbor" and "weigh." ROY G. BIV is the man who helps you remember the spectrum order—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet. And every do-it-yourselfer knows that tool usage calls for righty tighty, lefty loosey.

Music students are familiar with Every Good Boy Deserves Fruit, the EGBDF that signifies the lines of the musical staff. FACE tells you the spaces. Guitar players remember the tuning with Eat All Dead Gophers Before Easter, signifying the order of strings.

To remember the order of the planets from the Sun outward—Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto—keep in mind that My Very Educated Mother Just Served Us Nice Pickles. Never Eat Soggy Waffles provides the compass points, but if you can't remember the four you probably shouldn't be running around loose outdoors anyway.

Science students use long-cherished memory aids of all kinds. For the sympathetic nervous system: fight or flight. The parasympathetic: rest and digest. Toronto Girls Can Flirt And Only Quit To Chase Dwarves tracks the hardness scale for minerals from talc to diamond. I like the blitheness of the medical treatment, "If the face is red, raise the head. / If the face is pale, raise the tail."

Many children's rhyming games are disguised mnemonics. From my own days as a champ jump roper, particularly adept at Double Dutch, I suddenly remember one surely intended for learning numerical sequence: One, two, buckle my shoe / three, four, shut the door / five, six, pick up sticks / seven, eight, lay them straight / nine, ten, big red hen.

—BARBARA STACY

Ars Memorandi Paris, 1470

pisces

February 20 -March 20

Neptune

Mutable Sign of Water

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
Feb. 20 WANING Virgo	21 *Speak no evil*	22 Libra	23 *Visit still water*	24 Scorpio	25 *Choose with care*	26
27 Sagittarius	28 *Distrust false charm*	29 *Choose your prize* Capricorn	Mar. 1 Matronalia	2 *Make a talisman*	3 Aquarius	4 *Claim privacy*
5 *Clarify a muddle* Pisces	6	7 WAXING Aries	8 *Aiden Quinn born, 1959*	9 *Dream a fantasy* Taurus	10 *Sharon Stone born, 1958*	11 *Divine the future*
12 *Trust a hunch* Gemini	13	14 *Travel a new path* Cancer	15 *Leave well-enough alone*	16 *Plan ahead* Leo	17	18 *Wish on the Moon* Virgo
19 chaste moon	20 WANING *All is one*					

Pyramus and Thisbe, from Ovid, *Metamorphoses*

Bruges, 1484

Pyramus and Thisbe

The story begins simply, is best simply told. Neighbors. Childhood playmates. Young sweethearts. Feuding parents. Large wall.

Here things get more complicated. Fortunately the wall had a chink through which the young people channeled their endearments. While they could hear each other, they could not see each other, although they each kissed the crack in the wall to squeeze through their love. And one evening they determined to run away together at dead of night and meet at the tomb of Ninus, next to a lovely spring by a snowy mulberry tree.

Stealthily Thisbe crept from the house, her face hidden by a veil, and awaited her darling under the tree by the tomb. Suddenly in the distance she saw a lion trotting toward the spring, the beast's muzzle gleaming red with fresh blood. The terrified girl fled into the darkness of a nearby cave, dropping the veil as she ran. After slaking its thirst, the lion found the veil and tore it to tatters with bloodstained jaws.

When Pyramus arrived and found the bloody veil, he wept and kissed the garment. "Tis I who am to blame for exposing you to danger," he wailed. "Come, you lions, tear me limb from limb. Devour my guilty person." Since no creatures obliged, the lad drew his sword and thrust it into his breast. As Pyramus lay dying, his blood gushed forth and the roots of the tree, soaked in gore, tinged the white berries with the same rich purple.

Now the girl, emboldened with excitement, emerged cautiously to meet her lover. She stared uncertainly at the transformed tree, unsure if she were in the right spot. And then Thisbe discerned the motionless figure on the grass. Weeping piteously, she planted a kiss on his cold lips, her tears mingling with his blood. When she saw her bloody veil and realized what had happened, Thisbe cried, "My love is as great as yours, and I will follow you in death. And may the tree that will soon shelter our lifeless forms mark forever the constancy of our hearts and always bear fruit the color of our blood. And may our destiny provide us with a single tomb."

So it happened. Always mulberry trees bear purple fruit, and the ashes of Pyramus and Thisbe rest entwined in a single urn.

From *Pagan Lovers, Entertainments from the Greeks and Romans*, by Barbara Stacy

It happens to everybody, even the most organized individuals. Something has gone missing. A key, a credit card, a scrap of paper containing vital information, perhaps a cherished piece of jewelry is no longer where you expected it to be. Most people enter a state of panic, ransacking drawers, files, and cupboards. Witchcraft provides various techniques to help retrieve a lost possession. Here are a few suggestions:

I use the same means I would as if I found my clothing on fire—stop, drop, and roll. Rolling is optional, but one complete turn to the right helps to achieve a total shift in physical perspective. Flat on the floor, I calmly visualize the mislaid item, determine when I last held it, and retrace my movements from that point on. I sit up, face north, and hook my little fingers firmly together. In a matter of minutes, the lost is found.

—E.P.

If initial efforts yield no results, and panic is threatening, I stop myself and work a simple spell to provide a sense of action without creating further havoc. I write the name of the misplaced item on a piece of paper and wrap it with string, leaving a long tail to "draw the object to me." I then reel in the string until I have a sense of holding the misplaced item in my hands. I immediately put the object out of my mind, trusting that it will soon appear. If anxiety returns, I repeat the "reeling in" technique until the missing item comes forth.

—K.C.

Before mounting an intensive search of the premises, I go outside to observe the sky, feel the wind, and listen to the sounds of life around me. This quiets my mind and releases memory to flow unhampered by the stress of loss. I carefully review possible places, vow to perservere, and promise to be patient until the lost is found. If success is slow in coming, I work a simple candle spell to speed the process along:

Dress a candle with Drawing Oil (a sprig or pinch of the dried herb rosemary steeped in lavender essential oil). Apply the oil from the center of the candle to the wick all around, and then from the center to the base until the entire candle is lightly coated. Place the dressed candle in a sturdy candlestick on a triangle of white paper and light the candle. Visualize the missing thing in precise detail while you stare at the flame. Take in a deep breath, blow out the candle and shut your eyes to see its rising afterglow.

—M.A.

presage

by Dikki-Jo Mullen

ARIES 1999 — PISCES 2000

The year ahead brings transits of both Saturn and Jupiter in Taurus. This is a potent combination of planetary force in the heavens. As you consult your own birth sign forecast you will encounter references concerning the ways those planets in particular are operating in your life. The two large, important planets combining in the earthiest of earth signs brings to mind the Green Man. His image of irrepressible vitality dates back to primitive times. He is the spirit of the trees, rain, seeds, and plant life—a fertility deity, vibrantly alive. As we welcome the 21st century and the new millennium, the Green Man can offer much comfort. Hold his humor and spirit within your heart. His special magic helps you draw inspiration from the Old Ways to create the brightest and best of futures.

Your personal birth sign forecast will guide you during the year ahead so you can make the decisions which will assure a successful future in every way. If you were born on the day of a sign change, called the cusp, both forecasts will apply. Check with your personal astrologer, who will use your place and time of birth to ascertain which is your actual Sun sign. The Sun sign is the only part of the horoscope known to most people. It describes your ego, sense of purpose, and identity; it shows how you shine. For more information, study the forecasts for your Moon sign and Ascendant or Rising sign. The Moon will offer insights about domestic and emotional needs, while the Ascendant shows how you appear and function as part of the physical world around you.

ASTROLOGICAL KEYS

Signs of the Zodiac
Channels of Expression

ARIES: pioneer, leader, competitor
TAURUS: earthy, stable, practical
GEMINI: dual, lively, versatile
CANCER: protective, traditional
LEO: dramatic, flamboyant, warm
VIRGO: conscientious, analytical
LIBRA: refined, fair, sociable
SCORPIO: intense, secretive, ambitious
SAGITTARIUS: friendly, expansive
CAPRICORN: cautious, materialistic
AQUARIUS: inquisitive, unpredictable
PISCES: responsive, dependent, fanciful

Elements

FIRE: Aries, Leo, Sagittarius
EARTH: Taurus, Virgo, Capricorn
AIR: Gemini, Libra, Aquarius
WATER: Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces

Qualities

CARDINAL	FIXED	MUTABLE
Aries	Taurus	Gemini
Cancer	Leo	Virgo
Libra	Scorpio	Sagittarius
Capricorn	Aquarius	Pisces

CARDINAL signs mark the beginning of each new season — active.
FIXED signs represent the season at its height — steadfast.
MUTABLE signs herald a change of season — variable.

Celestial Bodies
Generating Energy of the Cosmos

Sun: birth sign, ego, identity
Moon: emotions, memories, personality
Mercury: communication, intellect, skills
Venus: love, pleasures, the fine arts
Mars: energy, challenges, sports
Jupiter: expansion, religion, happiness
Saturn: responsibility, maturity, realities
Uranus: originality, science, progress
Neptune: dreams, illusions, inspiration
Pluto: rebirth, renewal, resources

Glossary of Aspects

Conjunction: two planets within the same sign or less than 10 degrees apart, favorable or unfavorable according to the nature of the planets.

Sextile: a pleasant, harmonious aspect occurring when two planets are two signs or 60 degrees apart.

Square: a major negative effect resulting when planets are three signs from one another or 90 degrees apart.

Trine: planets four signs or 120 degrees apart, forming a positive and favorable influence.

Quincunx: a mildly negative aspect produced when planets are five signs or 150 degrees apart.

Opposition: a six sign or 180 degrees separation of planets generating positive or negative forces depending on the planets involved.

The Houses — *Twelve Areas of Life*

1st house: appearance, image, identity
2nd house: money, possessions, tools
3rd house: communications, siblings
4th house: family, domesticity, security
5th house: romance, creativity, children
6th house: daily routine, service, health
7th house: marriage, partnerships, union
8th house: passion, death, rebirth, soul
9th house: travel, philosophy, education
10th house: fame, achievement, mastery
11th house: goals, friends, high hopes
12th house: sacrifice, solitude, privacy

ECLIPSES

Since earliest times eclipses have awed stargazers. These mysterious temporary disappearances of the Sun and Moon were once thought to be caused by attacks from a gigantic sky dragon. The Moon's nodes, which correlate with the signs of eclipse activity, were even named in honor of the dragon's head (north node) and tail (south node). North node eclipses are sometimes considered more favorable and south node more difficult. Eclipses promise excitement; they can herald unusual weather and world events which in turn will impact us as individuals.

There are four eclipses during the year ahead. If one should occur on or near your birthday, expect a memorable year with great turning points.

July 28	Full Moon Lunar in Aquarius with the south node – partial
August 11	New Moon Solar in Leo with the north node – total
January 20	Full Moon Lunar in Leo with the north node – total
February 5	New Moon Solar in Aquarius with the south node – partial

RETROGRADES

Retrograde motion is the backward movement of a planet. Although this is really an optical illusion created by variance in rates of speed of travel between different planets in the solar system as we observe them, we do respond to it. Retrograde cycles bring a need to reconsider, revise, and rest. For deeper insight, think of all words beginning with "re." When retrograde, planetary energies manifest in unexpected ways. They can be softer or blurred while retrograde. Retrograde motion is not unfavorable, just different.

The most familiar and powerfully felt retrograde cycle is that of Mercury, which occurs three to four times yearly for about three weeks each time. While Mercury is retrograde, old patterns repeat. People from the past can suddenly reappear. Complete old business, but postpone moves or the signing of contracts. Get extra rest, clarify directions, and verify appointments. Travel only to familiar destinations. It is an auspicious time for past life regression and ghost hunting. There will be four retrograde Mercury periods in the coming year.

MERCURY RETROGRADE

March 10 – April 3
in Aries and Pisces

July 13 – August 6
in Leo and Cancer

November 5 – 25
in Sagittarius and Scorpio

February 22 – March 15
in Pisces

Other important retrogrades this year involve Venus and Mars. Activities ruled by those planets will require patience and revision. Karmic situations can be involved.

In the case of Venus retrograde a complex love situation might have to be untangled. Venus is retrograde July 30 – September 11 in Virgo and Leo.

Retrograde Mars could be a sluggish cycle for an athlete. Mars begins the year retrograde, going direct on June 5 in Scorpio and Libra.

ARIES

The year ahead for those born under the sign of the Ram
March 21 to April 20

As the zodiac's first sign, youth is linked to the Ram. The Aries-born project an attractive, childlike quality. You focus on the future and have a special flair for releasing all that has outlived its usefulness. You prefer to keep your own schedule and are noted for arriving either early or, more often, late for appointments. There is a subconscious urge not to be dominated.

Ever the trailblazer of the zodiac, your quest to achieve the brightest and best this year is supported by Jupiter. From the vernal equinox until just after Midsummer Eve you will enjoy a once-in-twelve-years opportunity for growth and expansion as lucky Jupiter moves through your birth sign. At the same time Mars, your celestial ruler, is retrograde until June 5 on the cusp of your 7th and 8th houses. Look at repeating patterns with a partner, and don't be too trusting of one who has been a disappointment in the past. A legal matter may take extra time and patience to resolve. The April 16 New Moon in Aries ushers in a four-week cycle of self discovery and awareness. Cultivate the image you want to project with a new look. From Beltane through the first week of May there is a favorable Mercury conjunction with your Sun. Travel for business or pleasure promises success. Gather information and make decisions. For the remainder of May your 2nd house is strong; the focus is on finance.

Early in June Venus crosses into your 5th house, making a favorable trine until July 12. Artistic ability flourishes. Mid-July you will feel the first stirrings of the upcoming eclipse in Aquarius on July 28. It affects your 11th house. Discriminate in your choice of friends; reevaluate goals. By Lammastide Mercury retrogrades into your 4th house, remaining there until August 11. The domestic atmosphere can be a bit hectic. Reconsider a move. The rest of August brings a Grand Cross aspect pattern in the fixed signs. Dreams are limited by practical considerations. Live within your means and try to mingle business with pleasure. September finds Mars completing a long passage through Scorpio and crossing into your sister fire sign of Sagittarius. September 2 – October 16 this harmonious transit involving your 9th house elevates your aspirations and energizes you.

From the autumnal equinox through October 7 Venus moves toward a trine with your Sun. You will feel better about old loves and close relationships in general. The Full Moon September 25 falls in Aries, making a Grand Trine in fire signs with Mars in Sagittarius and Venus in Leo. It marks the start of a favorable four-week cycle for rewards from past labors and other deserved preferments to come your way. Ask your higher self what your most cherished wish is, then take steps to make it a reality. A romance has warmth and ease. A new acquaintance can suddenly seem like a longtime, trusted friend during October. The week of All Hallows' you will feel Mars crossing your midheaven as it forms a square to your Sun. From the end of October through November 26 keep a positive attitude about competition and prepare for professional responsibilities to be a bit heavy. Self control and focusing on priorities assures success by Thanksgiving. Do research work if arguing a case with a boss or other authority; there are hidden factors to consider. Late autumn is brightened by Jupiter retrograding back into Aries, where it will remain for several happy months through Valentine's Day. Follow through with projects you were drawn to early in the year. Success is realized on many levels if you are confident and embrace opportunity.

The New Moon in Sagittarius on December 7 is flavored by Pluto. A recollection of a past life can help you understand your life's purpose by Yuletide. This lunation in the 9th house is very cerebral for you, bringing in two weeks of preoccupation with philosophical studies and other intellectual pursuits.

The Full Moon December 22 stirs hereditary traits and early childhood conditioning. Examine your roots. The year 2000 begins with a positive influence from Venus which lasts until January 24. You will use words with creativity and power. Spiritual art and music can stir you.

The eclipses of January 20 and February 5 make Candlemas a time when old goals are set aside and new loves develop. There is an enthusiasm to reform and uplift society as a whole. Neptune in your 11th house is aspected by the eclipses. This makes you idealistic and altruistic. On February 12 Mars enters Aries where it will remain through the vernal equinox. It's easy to be a bit too forceful and impatient; however, you can accomplish a great deal. As a leader and innovator, you are in top form through March 20. Mercury will be retrograde in your 12th house February 22 – March 15. Concentrate on important tasks—getting lost in a daydream could be costly or inconvenient. Two Full Moons in a row in Virgo, on February 19 and March 19 emphasize the 6th house. New health care programs can be of interest. There will be a desire to do good work and contribute. An animal friend bonds with you under these lunations.

HEALTH

Primitive instincts and biological urges must be satisfied to assure health and well-being. With Mars, ruler of desires and passions, ruling you, frustrated energy can manifest in recklessness or destructiveness. If angry, don't overdo exercise or ignore routine safety precautions. Protect your eyes and get regular dental checkups. Your 6th house of health (ruled by Virgo) is strong in September and near the final two Full Moons of the year in February and March. Well-being increases at those times. Information about health needs comes your way then as well.

LOVE

You often fall in love quickly. Pace yourself when nurturing a new romance. You can overwhelm a new companion with fierce intensity. A little extra patience can put a new relationship on more solid ground. Try sharing a bicycle or camping excursion with one you cherish. You revel in being active. Venus makes a long transit through your 5th house of pleasure June 6 – July 13, then returns August 16 – October 7. The heavens favor love and hobbies and promise pleasure then.

FINANCE

Saturn is affecting your 2nd house the year long. Keep a positive attitude about money and income. Enjoy what you have and don't worry about financial problems which haven't yet developed. Long-range security plans as well as financial obligations and commitments can be important factors. Skills learned from older, more experienced people can help. The work ethic provides the best financial advice this year. Jupiter's transit through your birth sign through the spring and again October 24 – February 13 ushers in more opportunity and prosperity. Travel can have a positive impact on business.

SPIRITUALITY

"I Am" is your spiritual signature, showing a need for individual expression. In Hindu astrology Aries is represented as a thunderbolt or fire. Your sign marks the start of spring—as the Ram emerges, form is created from the void. Jason and the Argonauts sought the Golden Fleece, showing the Ram as emblem of quest and adventure. A golden ram appeared in Greco-Roman myth as a side of Hermes that could fly and talk. This shows a link between spirituality and intellectual inquiry combined with activity which is unique to you. The Aries Full Moon September 25 and the dates Jupiter crosses the Aries cusp (June 28, October 24, February 14) mark cycles of spiritual awakening and expansion.

TAURUS

The year ahead for those born under the sign of the Bull
April 21 to May 21

Ruled by sensual Venus, Taureans always appreciate beauty and texture. The sense of touch is especially linked to your birth sign. This extends to your desire to grasp and attain mastery over the material world. The vernal equinox finds Venus entering your birth sign where it will remain until April 12, bestowing bright prospects for love and happiness. Cultural pursuits, especially those involving music, can bring pleasure as well as profit. Mars completes an opposition to your Sun April 13 – May 5. Avoid confrontations; allow others to learn from their own mistakes. Cantankerous or volatile people can drain your energy unless you turn your focus inward. This trend peaks near the Full Moon April 30 when the Moon and Mars conjoin in Scorpio.

Your birthday finds you aware of the passage of time and longing to contribute in your field. This serious, responsible theme plays in the background throughout the year as Saturn is transiting Taurus. Mercury joins the Sun and Saturn in your sign May 9 – 23. This is a wonderful time for travel as well as to shop for study aids, make decisions, and schedule meetings. Mental clarity and cleverness are at a peak. The first week of June finds Mars stationary direct in your 6th house. Squabbles with coworkers can be worked out. You are about to start a new cycle of energy and enthusiasm directed at routine work and service.

Mid-June through July 12 Venus moves through your home and family sector. Create an atmosphere of love and beauty around your residence. Family dynamics improve. The remainder of July finds Jupiter brightening the cusp of Aries–Taurus with the promise of future riches and rewards. Aspirations developed now can begin to materialize after February 14 when Jupiter's blessings and bounty move completely out of Aries and into your own birth sign. The eclipses of late July and early August affect your 4th and 10th houses. Be receptive to changes regarding home and working arrangements. This can be a special challenge for the Taurus-born, who often resist the unfamiliar.

Venus turns retrograde near Lammastide until September 11. Use caution in financial matters and tolerate others' behavioral lapses. Love favors subtlety and patience now. For the remainder of September, Neptune hovers on your midheaven. Verify hunches and suspicions about career matters—it's easy to be affected by rumor and misinformation. Your creative ability and imagination can open new professional avenues in the months to come.

The week before All Hallows' finds you highly visible. Magical abilities are at a peak. The Full Moon October 24 falls in Taurus, charging you with special energy and sensitivity. Focus this celestial gift on a worthwhile goal. Halloween brings signs of your progress and achievements. November's retrograde Mercury affects the 7th and 8th houses. Use care in initiating legal proceedings or signing contracts. Insurance coverage, investments, or tax matters may require scrutiny. Surprising and conflicting information can emerge if studying past lives or undergoing hypnosis; approach both with caution.

December finds a stellium of Aquarius planets including Mars, Uranus, and Neptune in your 10th house. Innovation, intuition, and energy all affect career aspirations. Though potentially controversial, you will be highly visible and influential. The Full Moon just after Yule brightens your 3rd house. The remainder of December

favors a short break and discussion of issues. A kindly letter or phone call helps you understand a complex issue. Siblings are supportive. The new millennium opens with the Sun and Mercury trine your natal Sun. This benevolent force is in effect New Year's Eve through January 18. Health and vitality improve. Now is the time for that special journey to a foreign land or sacred site. Candlemas falls midway between two eclipses which square your Sun. As January ends and February begins much is demanded of you. Release stress through meditation, and get enough rest.

On February 12 Mars enters your 12th house where it will remain through the vernal equinox. You will revel in solitude, accomplishing much while alone. Research projects and goals are very personal under this transit; there is much you won't share or reveal. The retrograde Mercury in Pisces February 22 – March 15 in your 11th house can help you to reconnect with old friends or renew club affiliations and memberships. The New Moon on March 6 brings certain specifics into view. The last weeks of winter will be an unusually sentimental time, stirring old dreams and goals to the surface.

HEALTH

Habits, good as well as destructive, affect your health and fitness. Establish a routine to care for yourself. Saturn, planet of time and maturity, is transiting your sign all year. Be aware of your own limitations—don't over-stress the mind and body. Review family health histories for better insight into your own needs. You are especially sensitive to sound; avoid noise pollution, for it can genuinely make you ill.

The retrograde Venus cycle occurring July 30 – September 11 involves both your Sun sign and health sector rulers. Try to correct unhealthy habits at that time. By all means, get a second opinion concerning any aggressive medical care. The New Moon in Libra on October 9 falls in your 6th house of health. It begins a four-week cycle of changes for the better. Valuable guidance concerning your well-being is forthcoming at this time.

LOVE

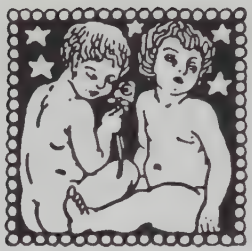
Durability and stability are qualities which will attract you to a lover. Your expectations are high—remember to overlook all-too-human flaws. You're sensual and very passionate. Velvet or silk coverings, fragrance, candlelight, and music will deepen your pleasure in lovemaking. Persistence often helps you win the companion you most desire. The stars show romantic bliss during the first three weeks of spring, while Venus is in Taurus. October 8 – November 8 brings a transit of Venus through your love sector as well as a Full Moon in your birth sign. Charm will be at a high point. Circulate, if single; plan special outings with your nearest and dearest if attached.

FINANCE

As an earth sign, you are very focused on security. A satisfying and well-paid job is a high priority. You can enjoy the study of accounting, investment, and finance. Pluto is in the midst of a long passage through your 8th house. You will be aware of how others impact your security. Developing new financial strategies will be satisfying. June 29 – October 23 Jupiter moves through the early degrees of Taurus. Look for new ways to add to income and acquire more security. Ideas and plans developed then can manifest in early 2000. Jupiter returns to your sign February 15 where it remains for a span of several months.

SPIRITUALITY

"I Have" is your signature phrase of destiny fulfillment. Possessions and the concept of money are described by the earliest symbolism involving the Bull. The first wild animal to be tamed and harnessed, the bull hints at order, structure, and possession wherever it appears in primitive art. For spiritual awakening spend some time surrounded by fresh grass and other greenery. The magic of green, growing things will feed your soul, just as they actually feed the bull. On May 15 a New Moon in Taurus is aspected by Mercury and Saturn. Spiritual experiences should be deeply meaningful during the three weeks following the lunation.



GEMINI

The year ahead for those born under the sign of the Twins
May 22 to June 21

Engaged in perpetual conversation, the celestial Twins illustrate your thirst for knowledge and focus on communication. You're happiest when able to pursue several interests and projects at once.

The year begins with Mercury, your ruler, retrograde in the 10th house and square your Sun. Double-check work, and don't make a job change. Patience and listening skills will help you capitalize on transformations in your profession. This trend culminates April 3, then accent shifts to the 11th and 12th houses. Be group-oriented and support others then. Subtlety and consideration carry you a long way.

Venus graces your sign April 13 – May 8. Favorable aspects to Uranus and Neptune strengthen this positive trend. Appreciation and reward for hard work come your way. Favors and debts can be repaid to you. Experiment with creative projects. Beltane is the ideal time to beautify yourself and your surroundings. Mars enters Libra the first week of May where it will remain until July 4, at a trine to your Sun. Vitality and enthusiasm are high. Pursue a new hobby or develop an exercise regime. You accomplish much in record time through your birthday month. Select goals at the New Moon in Gemini on June 13.

The month of July finds Saturn and Jupiter in your 12th house opposing Mars in the 6th. Work independently—associates may argue with you or block your progress. Sidestep controversy at work. If you have several animals in your household, there may be some competition among them to resolve. The eclipse July 28 favorably highlights your 9th house. Take a workshop or engage in meditation and ritual work near that date. Prepare for the Lammas celebration by researching the significance of that sabbat. August finds Mercury completing a retrograde cycle in your 2nd and 3rd houses. Through August 6 allow extra time for travel delays. Be discreet in how much you reveal about your finances; don't leave yourself open to criticism by an insensitive type. The eclipse August 11 finds you busy with mail and calls. Get both sides of a story before reacting to any conflicts. Before the end of August you might make new arrangements for transportation.

September 1 – 16 Mercury and the Sun in Virgo highlight your 4th house. A new sense of what home and family really mean develops. It's a marvelous time to sort through family keepsakes for a deeper awareness of your heritage. Real estate transactions can be important. The New Moon September 9 brings specifics into focus. Mid-September through October 16 Mars joins Pluto in Sagittarius and both oppose your Sun. Relationships and commitments are in flux. Avoid aggressive types and take normal precautions to deter crime. October 7 – November 8 Venus, Mars, and Saturn form a Grand Trine in earth signs. You will be newly aware of how the Earth is changing to welcome the new millennium. Honor nature at All Hallows' by spending extra time outdoors. Have faith concerning financial matters—you might tend to worry about security needs which haven't really arisen.

November 9 – December 3 Venus moves through your 5th house in your sister air sign of Libra. Enjoy music and other branches of the arts. Children are loving and delightful companions. Accept all invitations: a party or other gathering helps you to make important new contacts, perhaps even a romantic liaison. The Full Moon in Gemini on November 23 heightens the force of this benevolent transit. Yuletide finds your ruler, Mercury, in Sag-

ittarius where it will remain through New Year's Eve in your 7th house. Teamwork and negotiation are the keys to success. It's easy to get distracted, much is going on at once. Work on concentration and organization. January 1 – 24 Venus will oppose your Sun. There can be some confusion to sort out over love and entertainment choices. Try to learn more about those dearest to you. Don't let peer pressure tempt you to overspend or to indulge in extreme behavior. Keep good company.

The end of January through February 5 Mercury joins the Sun to form a trine from your 9th house. It's a perfect time for travel. Studies can open new avenues of understanding, especially of a scientific or philosophical nature. Decorate the Candlemas altar with emblems from the magical traditions of a faraway land. A touch of the exotic heightens the power. Postpone decisions about love until February 18. Then, Venus begins a favorable transit through Aquarius where it will conjoin Neptune and Uranus. This lasts until March 13. There is a sparkle to social situations. An unusual or talented friend draws closer. Color and sound add to spiritual awakening. The last week of winter Mercury finishes its retrograde and Mars makes a favorable sextile to your Sun. Health and energy levels are better than they have been in weeks. You feel strong and highly effective. Make plans; discard debris in the form of worn-out possessions, relationships which have run their course, or outmoded ideas.

HEALTH

Nervous energy is always abundant. It's important for you to stay mobile and busy. Boredom and redundancy will make you wither. Massage and stretching exercises are good, for you must stay limber. Your sign has a special rulership over the nimbleness of the limbs and hands. Favorable aspects from Neptune and Uranus make this year a time when spiritual healing and visualization aid well-being. Get extra rest during the four retrograde Mercury periods. Recurring health conditions could need attention then as well.

LOVE

As an air sign, there is a refinement and finesse about your approach to love. You will seek wit and variety combined with kindness in a companion. Mid-April through early May and mid-November through early December bring favorable aspects from Venus, promising good fortune in matters of the heart. An eclipse pattern in your 3rd and 9th houses can bring sudden changes in attitude, drawing you toward different people from the end of July through early August and again near Candlemas.

FINANCE

With the Moon ruling your 2nd house of money there are always fluctuations in your income and your attitude about money. A family member can help you select a career. Jupiter's transit through Aries this year highlights your 11th house. Membership in professional organizations or other groups can open doors to new opportunity. The New Moon in Aries on April 16 activates this pattern. Postpone signing contracts or making important purchases during the retrograde Mercury cycles from November 5 – 25 and again February 22 – March 15. Planetary combinations during both of those periods hint that caution is best with important financial moves.

SPIRITUALITY

"I Think" is your signature phrase. Spiritual teachings which stimulate your keen intellect will uplift you. The Twins are the first of the zodiac's human symbols. The divine child seeking enlightenment and wisdom links to Gemini. The Twins are positive and negative sides of the same person as the shadow twins of Celtic lore suggest. This reveals our constant struggle to balance light and dark, good and evil in our lives. The July and February eclipses in Aquarius activate both Neptune and Uranus in your 9th house this year. Find spiritual awakening by becoming familiar with more of the details about mythological Twin archetypes during those months. You will be rewarded with new insight into yourself.

CANCER

The year ahead for those born under the sign of the Crab
June 22 to July 23

Just as the Crab encases itself inside a shell, the Cancer person has an active inner life. Beneath a tranquil facade many conflicting needs and emotions brew. Those born under this sign often mingle home, family, and the influence of mother figures into all of life's experiences. Many will work at home or be drawn to an occupation which is an extension of the home. Successful family-owned businesses frequently have a Cancer at the helm.

Spring begins with both Mercury and Mars in the water signs of Pisces and Scorpio, respectively. This creates a benevolent double trine for Cancers which is in force through April 17. The 9th and 5th houses are favorable. Your famous memory skills coupled with imagination enable you to perform brilliantly. Be more warm and assertive in love. One you cherish will appreciate extra attention. As the vernal equinox dawns, commit to developing a personal fitness program. The positive Mars influence now will make it beneficial. The New Moon April 16 conjoins Jupiter in your 10th house. A four-week cycle of career expansion begins; you have a chance to rise to prominence. Confidence and a bit of flamboyance in your professional sphere bring success.

May finds Mercury, the Sun, and Saturn in your 11th house. There is a deep urge to do good in the world, even if it's on a small scale. May 9 – June 5 Venus transits Cancer. You'll enjoy the arts. Entertain at home and an acquaintance becomes an admirer. Friends help with business and finance. From June 6 until just past Midsummer Day Mercury moves rapidly through Cancer. Organize your home office, plan a quick trip, and catch up on correspondence. Late June through the first week of July Leo transits in your 2nd house make you long to go on a shopping spree. Analyze your finances to figure out how to acquire the items you simply must have.

On July 5 Mars begins a favorable trine to your Sun, lasting until September 2. Expect an active summer. A new love could involve you in athletics. Vitality will be high. The eclipses of July 28 and August 11 affect your 8th and 2nd houses. Save a bit of extra money to cover an unexpected expense. Be flexible and relaxed about expenditures. Income can come from a new source. August 1 – 11 Mercury reenters your sign as it completes its retrograde. There can be a memorable journey. It's also a good time to examine new options and plan a course of action. As August ends, Jupiter turns retrograde in your 11th house. You can discover new sides to a friend's character. Accept imperfections with a philosophical attitude. Someone close to you is about to change for the better.

September finds Mercury joining the Virgo Sun in your 3rd house, both sextile your natal Sun by the autumnal equinox. Information is the key to success. Ask questions, and keep up with current news. A sibling or neighbor is informative and helpful. September 22 – October 16 Mars in Sagittarius aspects several planets including Venus and the Sun as it moves through your 6th house at a quincunx to your birth sign. Timing can be off, so try again if you have trouble making a purchase or reaching an important person. Stress factors affect health—relax and laugh at trivialities. An animal friend can be frustrated or restless. Encourage your favorite familiar to exercise. October 17 – November 26 Mars transits Capricorn and activates your 7th house. A legal matter might require attention. Think carefully before entering into a new partnership or

making an impulsive promise. The end of November through December 5 Venus is strongly aspected in your 4th house. It's a perfect time to decorate for Yuletide and plan holiday parties. You'll take special pride and pleasure in your home now.

The New Moon on December 7 conjoins Pluto in your 6th house, ushering in a two-week cycle of emphasis on health—maintain good habits now. Yuletide brings a Full Moon in your own birth sign on December 22. Dreams can find you connecting with spirit guides. Express emotions constructively by doing something about unsatisfactory conditions. Childhood memories and nostalgia are potent influences as the new millennium begins. Learn from the past, but don't dwell on it.

January 1 – 18 the Sun and Mercury oppose your Sun. Listen carefully in conversation; observe others. You can learn by examining new viewpoints. The eclipses of late January and early February affect your 2nd and 8th houses. Changing economic trends make it essential for you to keep your job skills current. Plan for the financial future conservatively, keeping a bit in reserve. Past life studies promise to be successful and rewarding. As winter wanes Mercury passes through your 9th house in Pisces. While it's retrograde February 22 – March 15 review old books and notes; facts recalled can be useful. After it turns direct, plan a spiritual or educational pilgrimage. Current events, news shows, and publications are important sources of information March 16 – 20.

HEALTH

Be aware of how surroundings impact you. A depressing or stressful environment can literally make you ill. Home remedies and family recipes have a way of soothing ills and uplifting your spirits. Experiment with folk remedies for minor ailments (with your doctor's permission, of course). Jupiter rules your health sector. It will be retrograde August 25 – December 21. Vitality can be rather low and small complaints can surface then. Health should improve dramatically when Jupiter makes its final passage into Taurus on February 15.

LOVE

Sharing secrets about family and childhood can help you cement bonds with a prospective companion. Work on confidence and security. Fear of rejection can make you worried, thus creating a block to intimacy. May and June bring favorable transits from Venus, with a promise of happiness. December 6 – 23 also looks happy with a Venus passage through your 5th house, followed by a Full Moon in your birth sign. Ruled by the Moon, a walk or picnic by moonlight is the perfect scenario for love. For better insight into love dynamics, be aware of how the lunar phases affect your moods as well as the overall pattern of long-standing relationships. Exchange silver crescent Moon charms or other lunar emblems with one you care for to protect your love.

FINANCE

Cancers have a way of rising above early circumstances to become affluent later in life. The Crab's persistence in holding on no matter what illustrates the tenacity this sign is capable of. Persistence and determination usually help Moon Children attain security. Excessive generosity can be a problem, though. Give only what you can truly afford. This tendency to give too much is strong while Jupiter is square your Sun from March 20 – June 28 and again October 24 – February 14. The eclipses this year affect your financial houses, the 2nd and 8th. Prepare for changes in income and welcome new opportunity.

SPIRITUALITY

"I Feel" is your cry for spiritual identification with the outer world. Ruled by the Moon, Cancer has always been the champion of goddess archetypes. The Crab came to the aid of the goddess Hera, and she gratefully gave it a place in the heavens forever as a constellation of stars. The enclosing shell of the Crab suggests the seclusion and secrecy of the gestation period preceding birth. The Moon's phases activate your spiritual growth. Learn more of their significance and incorporate it into your ritual work.

LEO

The year ahead for those born under the sign of the Lion
July 24 to August 23

Noble, warm, and generous, you prefer to bask in the spotlight of admiration and respect. There is an elegance and authority about you, suggested by your celestial symbol, the royal Lion.

Your 9th house is brightened by the Sun and Jupiter in your sister fire sign of Aries as the year begins. The old paths are a little too well-worn; you're ready for a change. You will fulfill this promise before Jupiter changes signs for the last time in mid-February. Travel, educational programs, or spiritual disciplines can be instrumental in the tremendous growth you will enjoy in the months ahead.

The New Moon in Aries on April 16 focuses on the specifics. Mercury crosses into Aries April 18, ushering in a three-week cycle when you'll solve problems and use words with special eloquence and power. Mars is retrograde in your 4th house at a square to your Sun through May 5, indicating tension with a relative or dissatisfaction with your home. Control resentment and anger while searching for a solution. The end of May through early June finds Venus in your 12th house. Be discreet and reserved about voicing your true feelings; romance is complex and sensitive. Helping someone in need brings a sense of peace. On June 6 Venus crosses into your sign, promising a month of frolic and happiness.

Just after Midsummer Day Mercury begins an exceptionally long passage through your birth sign, lasting until August 31. You will be thoughtful, future-oriented, and expressive through summer's warmest days. Be well informed—knowledge is truly power under this star pattern. The Full Moon June 28 falls in your 6th house. Health is accented; getting organized will help you feel better emotionally and physically. Give extra thought to honoring Lammas this year. It is an important time of endings and beginnings, for the total solar eclipse August 11 is in Leo.

Your birthday month begins a truly surprising year. The secret to making it a success is not to struggle against changes. August 16 – October 7 Venus reenters Leo to complete its retrograde. You'll sort through relationship issues and find new ways to express creative ideas. Mars enters Sagittarius September 3 where it will energize you with a trine to your Sun through October 16. By the autumnal equinox you will integrate the Martian forces where they are most needed. Connect with the spirits of fire by learning more about different types of incense, ritual fires, and candle burning.

The last half of October brings an abrupt shift to a more earthy mood. Saturn in Taurus, Mars in Capricorn, and Venus in Virgo create a triad of earth sign aspects which affect your 2nd, 6th, and 10th houses. There can be competition at work, responsibilities to attend to, and a budget to balance. Enjoy what you have in a material sense; don't lament what hasn't been given to you. Let the work ethic guide you, and Hallowmas brings a glimmer of success to come. On November 9 Venus enters Libra and trines first Neptune, then Uranus by the month's end. Your 7th and 3rd houses respond. Legal matters move forward; closest relationships enjoy a touch of telepathy. It's easier to understand the innermost needs of others. Your charming use of words carries you a long way before Venus changes signs on December 5.

Throughout December Mars moves rapidly through Aquarius in opposition to you, along with Uranus and Neptune. Accept others as they are. If you try to challenge or reform anyone, anticipate resis-

tance. It's easy to fall prey to a sales pitch or be swept into the problems of another. Think for yourself and all will be well. Instead of making the rounds of parties this Yule, take an evening or two to make peace with yourself. Time spent alone is healing and brings wisdom.

The first Full Moon of the new millennium is a total lunar eclipse in your birth sign. It occurs very late on January 20, but you will sense its impact from New Year's Eve on. Profound changes concerning who you are and what your life is all about are due. December 31 – January 24 Venus is in your 5th house, favorably aspecting you. There are whisperings of a new love to warm the dark days before Candlemas. February brings an eclipse in Aquarius affecting your 7th house of relationships. People drift in and out of your life, abruptly changing in what they mean to you. Don't force a commitment, whether business or personal. There is a mercurial quality to others.

Jupiter enters Taurus mid-February to enter your 10th house where it will remain for many months while squaring your Sun. There is an urge to gamble a bit professionally. You can learn a great deal now. Don't be too outrageous—you are in the public eye more than you know. Your 8th house is affected by Pisces transits during March. There can be a glimpse of the afterlife and other dimensions. The awareness of parallel realities sharpens at the New Moon in Pisces March 6. Two Full Moons in Virgo in February and March both fall in your 2nd house. This shows fluctuations in income and emotional issues around security. Patience will help you to stabilize finances as winter wanes.

HEALTH

Naturally youthful in outlook, you will feel energized by the company of those who are younger. Elderly or negative companions can make you feel drained. Exercise care to avoid exposure to childhood diseases as an adult. The eclipses this year promise changes in vitality as well as the environment. Good health habits and enough rest are your best protection against illness. Avoid sugar, alcohol, and food additives this year.

LOVE

Leo rules the heart, and your sign is the consummate romantic, willing to risk all for love. This year elusive Neptune and unpredictable Uranus are planted firmly in your 7th house of marriage and partnerships. Unusual companions are drawn to you, and an existing relationship can change. Emphasize spiritual values with those closest to you. Use care if considering a marriage—a romance might be preferable. Love trends are especially bright mid-June through mid-July and again in January when Venus smiles.

FINANCE

Mercury and Virgo rule your 2nd house of finance. Always be aware of habits and patterns related to money matters when Mercury is retrograde. Financial planning will be in your thoughts from late June to early September when Mercury makes its long passage through your birth sign. You enjoy making a game of everything and can be tempted to gamble. Occasionally you'll be lucky, but don't visit a casino or purchase a risky stock when paying the bills hinges on the result.

SPIRITUALITY

"I Will" is your birth sign's signature. The "King of Beasts" is honored with awe and respect by the Hindus, Babylonians, and many African faiths. The Sphinx, a half-human, half-lion figure, represented immortality and wisdom. Buddha is said to have had a lion companion with magical powers. Exhibiting the legendary love and loyalty which Leo is known for, the great cat guarded Buddha's body faithfully after he departed from the Earth. Jupiter is in your 9th house much of the year, from the vernal equinox through June 28 and again October 24 – February 14. This, coupled with the eclipse pattern, promises some profound philosophical expansion. Travels to sacred sites or discussing religion with those of other faiths could play a role. Study spiritual poetry, sacred texts, and music this year to widen your perspective.

VIRGO

The year ahead for those born under the sign of the Virgin
August 24 to September 23

Bringing order out of confusion gives you deep satisfaction. Your cosmic ruler is thoughtful, agile Mercury. Dwelling in a universe of pure, rational thought would be your ideal. Your quick mind and talent for language will carry you far.

The year begins with Mercury retrograde in your opposing sign of Pisces. Background noise or other distractions can slow down your productivity. Verify appointments and double-check work until Mercury turns direct on April 3. After that benevolent aspects from Venus and Saturn in your sister earth sign of Taurus promise more happiness and prosperity. From April 4 – 12 trust hunches about business moves and quietly appreciate spring's beauty. Mid-April through May Aries transits highlight your 8th house. Others affect your finances. Settle tax and insurance obligations. May Eve is a perfect time for past life regression or puzzle-solving; your analytical gifts are in peak form. Mars retrogrades into Libra on May 7 where it will remain until July 4, affecting your 2nd house. You will work harder to add to security and protect treasured belongings. Expect periodic arguments about financial matters. Keep perspective and a sense of humor.

The first three weeks of June Gemini transits affect your 10th house. Public speaking can become part of your work, leadership potential surfaces, and you're more visible. Think about developing your professional persona. The New Moon in Gemini on June 13 crystallizes specifics. As Midsummer Eve passes, Venus and Mercury in your 12th house make you more reserved and introspective. You will offer support and suggestions in subtle ways and find joy in doing unsung acts of kindness. June 28 finds the Full Moon in Capricorn in your 5th house. This heightens emotional attachments to others. A friendship slowly blooms into a deeper admiration.

July 13 Venus enters your sign and forms a trine to Saturn in Taurus. This transit should affect your earning power and overall quality of life for the better through July 30. Your 6th and 12th houses are affected by the eclipse pattern of late July and early August. Health is impacted by other people and your environment. Make working conditions comfortable and wholesome. A person who makes you feel emotionally drained could be a psychic vampire and should be avoided. After Mercury turns direct on August 6 it's easier to identify the sources of problems and remedy them. Mars moves rapidly through Scorpio during August, energizing your 3rd house. Donate time or resources for the common good—the rewards will be obvious at the New Moon in your birth sign on September 9.

September 1 – 16 Mercury glides through Virgo. Life is exciting and mobile. As summer fades, welcome opportunities for study and travel. The influence of Mars conjoining Pluto in Sagittarius will be felt in your 4th house as the autumnal equinox approaches. Home and family matters need attention. You might consider a move or redecorating project. A relative is growing on many levels and surprises you by the time this trend culminates on October 18. Following its retrograde, Venus reenters your birth sign in mid-October bringing humor and happiness through November 8. Love and friendship will weave a special magic into All Hallows'. Favorable Mars and Saturn aspects during November make your workload lighter and more enjoyable. November's Mercury retrograde encourages you to draw upon the wisdom of past experience.

The Full Moon November 23 in your career sector presents an opportunity for you to demonstrate your talents. Yuletide brings an emphasis on Aquarius planets including Mars, Uranus, and Neptune in your 6th house. Health is impacted by your emotional state. Take time to meditate and relax. At Yule when the Sun enters Capricorn you will start to feel stronger. The Full Moon December 22 falls in your 11th house of hopes and wishes. You will experience a rush of optimism about the future.

January 1 – 18 your ruling planet Mercury dances through Capricorn making a trine to your Sun and Saturn. This supportive, earthy pattern provides grounding. Security and comfort are within reach; you will find solutions to problems and worthwhile opportunities. The week of the New Moon on January 6 should be especially favorable. January ends with a lunar eclipse in your 12th house. Seek ways to be your own best friend and enjoy solitude. A second eclipse on February 5 accents health and your daily schedule. Candlemas is a wonderful time to give thanks for your work and well-being.

Mid-February finds Jupiter entering Taurus. This is wonderfully supportive for study and travel for several months to come as it highlights your 9th house. Grandparent/grandchild relationships are blessed. February 22 – March 15 Mercury retrograde in Pisces opposes you from the 7th house. Verify information. Listen carefully—others aren't as they seem. Be cautious about taking advice. Winter closes with two Full Moons in a row in your birth sign, on February 19 and March 19. This rare phenomena stimulates emotions and accents interaction. Recognize the value of teamwork. You have a special sensitivity to others now.

HEALTH

Two eclipses this year, on July 28 and February 5 fall in your 6th house, the health sector. You might be drawn toward new health care practitioners and alternative medicine. Since these are in Aquarius along with Neptune and Uranus, get second opinions. A diagnosis might be wrong. Consume only fresh, healthy food and pure water. Be patient. Vitality is cyclical this year. You might feel better in just letting a little time pass if there's no real reason apparent for ill health.

LOVE

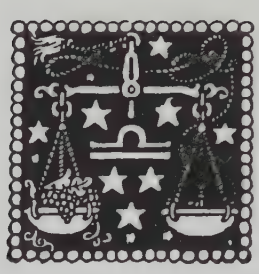
Cleanliness is essential for your comfort and happiness in enjoyment of physical contact. Try bathing with your beloved to enhance physical intimacy. Venus retrograde July 30 – September 11 falls in part in your sign. Expect a second chance at love then, or an opportunity to change destructive habits and clear the way for happiness. October 8 – November 8 brings a memorable Venus transit through Virgo. The rare double Full Moons in your sign February 19 and March 19 are ultra-romantic times. Express feelings; reach out to those you admire and cherish.

FINANCE

Your financial sectors, the 2nd and 8th houses, are ruled by Venus and Mars respectively. Extra expenses and setbacks can occur when these planets are retrograde early in the spring and toward the end of summer. However, with lucky Jupiter joining Saturn in Taurus to trine your Sun from late June through October and again after February 15, you can expect good fortune. This accelerates after your birthday. Always consider the overall financial picture. Your birth sign can fall victim to the penny wise, pound foolish syndrome.

SPIRITUALITY

"I Analyze" is your birth sign's signature phrase. Understanding the origins and philosophical concepts behind spiritual practices will help you to benefit from them. Your emblem, the Virgin, is one of the oldest representations of fruitfulness and growth. Celibacy, in this instance, refers to the idea of self-possession and maintaining personal identity after mating. Pursuing self-analysis will assist you on spiritual paths. You will revel in the details of preparing for sabbat celebrations. Love of detail gives Virgo a special affinity with ritual magic.



LIBRA

The year ahead for those born under the sign of the Scales
September 24 to October 23

Your focus is on human contact and companionship. As your emblem the Scales hints, you can tip first one way, then another in an effort to be fair. Don't let an inability to commit become a liability, and the year ahead will be a successful one.

Spring begins with a Full Moon in your birth sign at the end of March. Spend the vernal equinox making contacts and promoting yourself and your ideals; positive responses begin to manifest by All Fools' Day. Material concerns consume time and energy until just after Beltane. Mars is retrograde in your 2nd house from the equinox through May 5. Material cares of all kinds lighten after that.

April finds the transit Sun joining Jupiter to oppose your Sun through the 18th. Others encourage you to expand, explore, and take risks. This can be educational, but think matters through for yourself. Be alert concerning how associates are guiding you. April 13 – May 8 Venus brightens your life with a passage through Gemini. This creates a trine with other air sign influences involving Neptune and Uranus in Aquarius. Helpful and loving people enter your social circle. This is a wonderful time to begin a creative project. Mars enters Libra the first week of May, remaining there until July 4. You will grow increasingly competitive under this pattern. Control anger, don't overdo exercise, and this will be a time of great accomplishment. You will feel stronger after Mars turns direct on June 5.

The first three weeks of June find Mercury in your career sector. You might have more than one job, or your employment description might change. Be receptive to learning what's new in your field. June closes with Jupiter entering your 8th house. Financial planning, including investment strategies, will be a success. A new acceptance of the afterlife and a peaceful attitude about death and rebirth quietly permeate your consciousness during the hot, still days of summer.

An old mystery is revived near July 13 when Mercury turns retrograde and applies toward a square with Jupiter by the month's end. On July 30 Venus, your ruler, begins a retrograde in your 11th and 12th houses. This will affect you deeply through September 11. Friendships and alliances are changing; be patient with others. Express your love in subtle ways, putting the welfare of the beloved above your own comfort and happiness. If wandering alone in wilderness areas take routine safety precautions. Stay grounded during meditation and wear an amulet. Astral forces are afoot which can be damaging to your psyche. This is especially true during the eclipse pattern of late July and early August.

Mercury transits Libra September 17 – October 5. Autumn brings answers to several important issues. Travel if the opportunity arises, for journeys should be profitable as well as healing. The New Moon in Libra on October 9 is very well aspected to Pluto and Uranus. It's a promising time for new beginnings. The positive impact of the lunation lingers for four weeks. As All Hallows' Eve approaches you will feel a square from Mars in Capricorn. Expect pressures around the home. Be patient with argumentative relatives. Follow directions if operating tools or machinery.

On November 9 your ruler, Venus, enters your sign. A time of bliss begins. Your charm opens important doors, and the rewards of hard work are realized. Make important purchases. The good times continue until December 5 when Venus moves on. Your 3rd house is heightened by Sagittarius planets until the winter solstice. Calls

and letters demand response, and there are errands to run. Cope by arranging an efficient schedule—don't scatter your energies. The Cancer Full Moon on December 22 in your 10th house generates emotional situations around career, reputation, and credibility. Rectify mistakes and promote understanding. The air clears after January 18 when tense aspects in the cardinal signs begin to move out.

January ends with a stellium of Aquarius planets brightening your 5th house. You're able to use your creativity in a variety of ways to smooth the path for success near Candlemas. The eclipses of January 20 and February 5 accent the 5th and 11th houses. Friends suggest new goals; you're motivated and enthusiastic. First Mercury, then the Sun enter Pisces by the end of February. This focuses on health and diet. Don't overindulge in rich foods which can wreak havoc with your digestion. Walk outdoors—the brisk winter air will have a cleansing effect.

The New Moon in Pisces March 6 rewards you with renewed well-being. Mid-February through the equinox Mars crosses through Aries to oppose you. Follow rules and regulations. Legal matters and proprieties are delicate, and others are quite demanding. Avoid aggressive individuals. Observe human nature—others show you what to do as well as what not to do. Mercury turns direct March 15 in the portion of your chart which links to small animals. Such creatures are easier to understand the last week of winter. Make a decision about a new animal companion just before the equinox.

HEALTH

Balance is your key to well-being, as hinted at by the celestial Scales. Eat a balanced diet. If you also balance your time between commitments to home and profession, wellness is enhanced. With nebulous, Neptune-ruled Pisces on the cusp of your 6th house of health, illnesses can be hard to diagnose. Getting a second opinion or experimenting with alternative and faith healing can be helpful. Record your dreams—there can be health-related messages encoded in them from your higher self. This is especially true at the time of the Full Moon in Pisces on August 26.

LOVE

Equality is a goal in your relationships, for you respect fairness above all else. At the same time, constant growth and readjustment will be preferable to a static situation; an unsettled quality adds to the attraction of intimate ties. Ruled by Venus, you would hope for a partner with both inner and outer beauty. With Neptune and Uranus in your love sector all year, an exciting tie with past life connections can develop. Relationships are evolving and changing. It's an interesting but unpredictable time regarding love. Venus blesses you most brightly April 13 – May 8, November 9 – December 5, and February 18 – March 13.

FINANCE

Be wary of high pressure tactics from others. Jupiter in Aries in the spring and again during the autumn and winter months can tempt you to follow an example of risk and extravagance. You adore beautiful things and will have trouble resisting them. With Pluto ruling your 2nd house you are very aware of the power and influence that money can wield. Hidden assets or investments will often add to your security. The year ends on a promising note financially once Jupiter changes signs for the last time, moving into Taurus on February 15.

SPIRITUALITY

"I Balance" is your birth sign's signature. Fairness is always a value you insist upon. The Scale as a spiritual emblem dates back to Egyptian times when Thoth would weigh souls for judgement. Oriental philosophies have a special link to your birth sign. Experiment with feng shui to bring a more spiritual atmosphere to your home or office. The first day of Libra corresponds with the autumnal equinox. Measuring, weighing, and preparing for the coming winter are essential for survival. As a spiritual exercise on your birthday, observe how this concept is important in following your own route to higher consciousness.

SCORPIO

The year ahead for those born under the sign of the Scorpion
October 24 to November 22

Resourcefulness and secrecy are the traits bestowed by your emblem, the cosmic spider. As the spider weaves its shimmering web, you weave an intricate tapestry for your own life. The eternal passions and dramas linked to birth, death, and rebirth create an intensity about all you do and are.

The year begins with Mars, your co-ruler, retrograde in your own sign. Release old suspicions and hurts to make way for the healing magic of spring. Forgotten supplies and information surface to help you. Mercury in Pisces creates harmony in your 5th house through April 17. Learn from younger people. You will use words with exceptional skill and could even produce a manuscript for publication. The Full Moon in Scorpio on April 30 ushers in a two-week cycle of opportunity. Be visible, reach out to others.

May brings a strong alignment of planets in Taurus involving Saturn, the Sun, and, after the 9th, Mercury. Others can be demanding. Don't let a negative individual discourage you. The last week of May accents your 8th house. You solve problems with an easy brilliance. Mars turns direct in Libra the first week of June in your 12th house where it will remain through July 4. Dreams provide clues to your inner being. It won't be easy for you to express desires and needs openly, instead you will prefer the subtle approach. A drive or hike through a remote area to connect with the spirit of the wilderness would energize and heal you.

Jupiter moves into Taurus with the summertime and opposes you from the 7th house. You'll encounter others with very different philosophies. Be understanding. Others may make inflated promises. The eclipse in Aquarius July 28 conjoins Neptune in your 4th house. Changes at home can come swiftly. You could discover hidden facts about your heritage. Use care in real estate transactions—all isn't as it seems. Lammastide finds a T-square in the fixed signs involving planets in Leo, Taurus, Aquarius, and Scorpio. The eclipse pattern accents this. Be gentle with yourself regarding physical activities. This is a time of growth despite challenges. Let the higher powers mete out divine justice if you feel wronged. The eclipse of August 11 will reveal the specifics.

Your 10th house is strong the last half of the month, accented by Leo transits. Career dominates your thoughts. Don't let a little negative feedback dishearten you. Pluto, your ruler, has been retrograde since before the spring equinox. On August 19 it finally turns direct. The remainder of the year promises a faster pace. You're more confident about facing sensitive issues and resolving blockages of all kinds. You may sense having paid off a karmic debt.

Summer ends with Mars joining Pluto in your 2nd house on September 3. Move forward financially by changing your habits and attitude about money. The Sun and Mercury, sextile from your 11th house, bring friendly, helpful people September 1 – 16. The Full Moon in Aries September 25 affects your 6th house of health. Try new diets and exercise programs. Getting organized will have a positive impact on your overall wellness as September ends. Mercury crosses into your birth sign the first week of October where it will transit through All Hallows'. Accept a sudden invitation for travel. You process information quickly and uplift others by articulating your ideas. Your birthday month brings a favorable Mars aspect, in force through November 26. Mental and physical energies combine, making you highly effective. The New Moon on November 7 in Scorpio is a time

of focus and integration. Projects you conceive that week will unfold successfully for months to come. Following a retrograde, Mercury returns to Scorpio November 10 – December 10. It's a memorable time for travel, study, and important meetings.

The Full Moon in Gemini November 23 falls in your 8th house, bringing information about economic trends and financial obligations and strategies. Others reveal their emotional needs and vulnerabilities. Respect that, even if you dislike a weakness displayed by another. As Yuletide approaches, an unusual grouping of planets in Aquarius affects your 4th house. Neptune, Uranus, and Mars are involved. Take routine safety precautions around the house. Invoke Heartha or a guardian angel to bless home and family. Venus transits Scorpio December 6 – 30, ending the 20th century with happiness and celebrations. The financial outlook is bright. You will realize how deeply loved and appreciated you are. Saturn turns direct in Taurus during January, and Capricorn transits are in aspect through the 18th. A difficult relationship finally moves forward. It's easier to communicate. There is a focus on business and other practical matters. The New Moon on January 6 brings specifics to your attention.

There are complex situations affecting a family member and new developments concerning career at the end of January and early February. The eclipses in Leo and Aquarius generate unrest in your 4th and 10th houses just before and after Candlemas. On February 6 Mercury begins a long passage through Pisces lasting the rest of the season. This is in your 5th house, so creative solutions develop during the final weeks of winter. March 14 Venus enters Pisces in your 5th house of love. Romantic involvement or artistic project brings new happiness by the vernal equinox. You can combine business with pleasure now.

HEALTH

The force of old habits is always important. As a fixed sign it can be a challenge for you to change the old, destructive patterns unless they give you a real fright. Vitality will improve after Pluto completes its retrograde August 19. Until then, be gentle with yourself. You detest weakness and might push too hard with a health program. Aries rules the cusp of your health sector. Allow yourself time for recuperation and for a treatment to work. Shy away from radical health procedures. Don't make rash decisions—research several options if health conditions arise.

LOVE

Passion and the quest for love motivate you always. Experiencing the heights and depths of lovemaking is a must; you don't want to miss a thing. Keep a perspective, for you are prone to an obsessive or addictive love at least once in your life. As a water sign you will revel in an ocean voyage. It would provide the perfect controlled environment for indulgence in a special love affair. Mid-May and early December are times when Venus aspects promise an interlude of romantic bliss.

FINANCE

With Saturn opposing you all year long in materialistic Taurus, your greatest financial obstacles come through others. Try not to be overly generous. Use caution in following advice if you feel uncertain. Pluto is making a long passage through your 2nd house, showing your attitude toward finance is shifting. November – December looks promising for profits and new opportunity.

SPIRITUALITY

"I Create" is your spiritual signature. In mythology Scorpio is linked to the phoenix, the divine bird which recreates its own life from the ashes of the past. The Egyptian scarab, the sacred beetle of immortality, also belongs to you. It reveals your fascination with death and the afterlife. Near death experiences and past life regressions are important in your spiritual quest. By facing the darkness and overcoming it, the seeker is tempered and often strengthened.

SAGITTARIUS

The year ahead for those born under the sign of the Centaur
November 23 to December 21

The arrow of the celestial Archer, ready to fly swiftly toward its goal, best illustrates the straightforwardness of Sagittarians. Positive thinking and rising to meet challenges are natural traits which help you play every round in the game of life to win. Usually you feel subtlety is wasted time.

With the vernal equinox, fiery nature is amplified by a trine between Jupiter, your ruler, in Aries, and Pluto which is transiting your own sign of Sagittarius. Through All Fool's Day unexpected success—possibly financial or business-related—develops if you act promptly and decisively. The full impact of this should be obvious by the April 16 New Moon in Aries. Mid-April through May 8 Venus will clash with your Sun. Be more sensitive to the needs of others as Beltane approaches. Compromise and adapt to win another's loyalty. The last three weeks of May retrograde Mars in Libra sextiles you from the 11th house. Strategize to reach a goal. The Full Moon in Sagittarius on May 30 is flavored by Pluto. Spiritual awakening and contact with different lifestyles can change your perspective in the days following the lunation. It's a favorable time to work with groups; accept an offer to speak in public.

The first week of June finds Venus entering Leo, beginning a long transit through that sign which culminates October 7. This is marvelous for your social life, for it is trine your Sun for most of this period. The 9th house is involved. Foreign-born or well educated friends are coming into your life. On June 29 your ruling planet, Jupiter, will enter Taurus and your 6th house. You can overcome a long-time health condition. Through October 24, while this trend is in effect, you will have some very meaningful connections with animals.

July finds the Cancer Sun highlighting your 8th house through the 22nd. More water sign influences develop July 5 when Mars enters Scorpio and your 12th house. You will prefer peace and privacy, shunning open confrontations. There is much to learn about others; friends and enemies can change roles. It's an ideal time to analyze past lives or come to terms with childhood memories. Conditions over which you have little control affect financial matters after the New Moon on July 12. The Aquarius eclipse at the Full Moon July 28 touches your 3rd house. Communication can be scrambled. After Mercury turns direct on August 6 the confusion clears. The August eclipse in Leo can impact travel plans and encourage you to reexamine beliefs near Lammastide. August 12 – 31 Mercury is favorable. You will make all the best choices and decisions. Gather information and make contacts. This influence will be most positive until August 25. Jupiter, your ruler, turns retrograde that day until December 21. Overall, it marks a time when you must revise and reconsider. Vitality is a little lower; have routine health checkups. Old responsibilities must be addressed before you can move forward.

September 1 – 16 Mercury and the Sun in Virgo stir up your 10th house. Image and reputation are on your mind. All that you say and do is highly visible. You might have multi-faceted professional responsibilities. September brings Mars into Sagittarius where it will remain until October 16. The autumnal equinox finds you impatient and a little stressed. Fire rituals, candles, and outdoor exercise restore your balance. Call upon past experience or consult those in authority before acting on impulse. Use moderation when it comes to physically strenuous work or prolonged exposure to the elements. All Hallows'

finds Mercury entering your sign where it soon turns retrograde. Close out old projects. Discuss plans with those close to you through November 5. November 6–26 Mars makes some tense aspects to planets in cardinal signs while moving through Capricorn in your 2nd house. Budget carefully. You'll be working hard, but it will be a while before you see the rewards.

Late November through December 10 Mercury moves through your 12th house. You'll have many thoughts and feelings which are difficult to discuss. This active inner life deepens when Venus enters Scorpio December 5. The New Moon falls in Sagittarius December 7. It's a time to examine who you really are and what your life is all about. December 11 through Yule Mercury moves through your birth sign and Jupiter turns direct. Plans made earlier in the year manifest, and travel is interesting and rewarding. Financial burdens lighten; opportunities to add to income surface with the new millennium.

January 1 – 24 Venus smiles on your sign. Be creative and socialize. As Candlemas nears you will have the eclipses of January 20 and February 5 in your 9th and 3rd houses. You'll be a little restless and welcome a chance to wander unfamiliar territory or examine new ideas. Travel and study plans are changing. On February 12 Mars enters Aries and your 5th house of love and pleasure where it will remain through winter's end. A liaison grows warmer and more interesting by the hour. Jupiter joins Saturn in Taurus in your 6th house after Valentine's Day. You'll seek quality and productivity as a part of your daily routine. Progress is made with health goals by the equinox.

March finds retrograde Mercury and the Sun in your 4th house. You'll feel the urge to make changes in living arrangements, yet are unsure of the specifics. Postpone decisions about family matters until after March 15. The last two Full Moons of the year on February 19 and March 19 both fall in Virgo in your 10th house. Emotional issues come up at work. You will shine in contact with the general public.

HEALTH

Your health sector has an affinity with Taurus, sign of music. Sound therapy can work wonders. Try listening to Gregorian or Buddhist chants, chakra toning, or classical music if unwell. Also eliminate aggravating noise, for it can really be quite detrimental. Saturn is in your 6th house of health all year. This shows past health habits might be catching up with you. However, Jupiter joins Saturn June 29 – October 23 and again from February 15 on. Overall health should improve then.

LOVE

Adventure always adds zest to your love life. You subconsciously think of romance as a game and enjoy the thrill of the chase. Sameness or possessiveness makes you weary and ready to move on. Jupiter graces your love sector when it moves through Aries from the vernal equinox through June 28 and again from October 24 through Valentine's Day. Venus' entrance into Sagittarius on New Year's Eve begins a month of romantic bliss as you hail the year 2000.

FINANCE

Saturn rules income and is linked to your 2nd house. The year-long transit Saturn is planted firmly in Taurus. Hold onto established jobs. Patience and respect for the work ethic will bring rewards eventually. Mechanical and technical skills add to your security. Keep to a schedule at work. Poor timing can be costly.

SPIRITUALITY

"I Perceive" is your signature phrase. The Centaur represents wisdom; it links to Chiron, who taught Achilles in Greek myth. Seeking knowledge and thus widening perceptions is your spiritual path. Diana, the bow-toting huntress, and Epona, the Celtic mare goddess, are hunter and horse combinations which demonstrate the recurrent mystical themes of hunting and chasing. Meditate on these on December 7, the New Moon of your birth month, for spiritual insights. Animals heighten your sensitivity and are extremely important in your life.

CAPRICORN

The year ahead for those born under the sign of the Goat
December 22 to January 20

Steadiness and surefootedness are your trademarks as a child of the Goat. You are seldom deterred by obstacles. Ruled by Saturn, the heavenly timekeeper, you are often a late bloomer. The Goat tends to be overly serious when very young, yet will acquire humor, sparkle, and a light heart as time passes.

Venus enters Taurus and your 5th house on the eve of the vernal equinox. Spring begins with a glow of happiness and popularity which lasts until April 12. Nurture a romantic involvement; let crafts and music bring you joy. Throughout the year Saturn, your ruler, will also be in Taurus in the 5th. The needs of children bring extra responsibility. April 13 – May 8 Venus transits your 6th house. Develop a positive outlook about daily chores and health. At May Eve bonding deepens with animals. From the end of May through July 4 Mars moves through Libra, adding power and tension to your 10th house. Competition motivates you professionally, especially after Mars turns direct on June 5. From June 7 until just past Midsummer Day Mercury opposes while transiting Cancer and your 7th house. Probe beneath the surface to understand people and situations. Some mixed messages are being sent. The Full Moon on June 28 falls in your birth sign. Saturn supports it favorably, and a sense of stability returns.

Throughout July Mercury in Leo draws attention to your 8th house. Financial issues are especially appealing. The entry of Venus into Virgo, your sister earth sign, on July 13 marks a time when foreign travel and metaphysical art and music can bring happiness. One you love can introduce you to a new culture or study by August 15 when Venus retrogrades back into Leo, your 8th house. The Aquarius and Leo eclipses just before and after Lammas Eve impact finances as they fall in the 2nd and 8th houses. Income might come from a new source while an old one fades. Double-check tax and insurance paperwork. Your deepest desires are transforming—there is an internal death and rebirth cycle going on with you. Late August through September 2 Mars in Scorpio sextiles your Sun. Energy is high; goals are worth working toward now. Enlist the aid of enthusiastic acquaintances. Saturn, your ruler, turns retrograde August 30. This trend lasts until January 12. Don't begin a new project until old business is completed. September finds Mercury trine your Sun. It's a wonderful time to communicate. Your ability to solve problems through logic and common sense is at a peak.

As the early hues of autumn appear, the Full Moon cycle shines in your 4th house. The Aries lunation on September 25 brings domestic situations you've suspected to the fore. A repair might have to be made or a family member might have an important point to voice. Be observant around your dwelling place. October 1–16 Mars finishes a transit through your 12th house. You're reluctant to express anger or desires openly. Your inner life is especially active, and dreams shed light on your psyche. As All Hallows' Eve draws near the mood abruptly shifts. Mars crosses into Capricorn where it will remain until the end of November. Your natural leadership skills are demonstrated. There is a fiery magnetism about you, and much is accomplished if you control anger and impatience. Use special crystals and sacred stones on the Hallowmas altar to stabilize and draw the best from the powerful earth forces stimulated by Mars in Capricorn. Venus in Libra during November and early December enhances your professional im-

age. Use charm and creativity to bolster your career.

The Full Moon in Gemini November 23 brings adjustments in daily routine. Personnel can shift at work. In the three weeks before Yule the Sun, Pluto, and Mercury align in your 12th house. Joy comes in being charitable. You'll treasure privacy. The New Moon in Sagittarius December 7 helps you recognize and use the potentials of this transit. Winter begins with a Full Moon in Cancer. Legal and ethical matters are in your thoughts. Closest companions are a trifle emotional and insecure, so treat partners with special gentleness.

January finds Mercury moving into Capricorn and Saturn turning direct. Expect extra calls and letters. An impromptu journey is productive, and casual conversation can teach you a great deal. The New Moon in Capricorn on January 6 brings insight concerning who you are and what your life is all about. Venus enters Capricorn during the week before Candlemas and will remain in your birth sign through February 17. Your quality of life improves. Mars moves into Aries to stir up your 4th house in mid-February, remaining there through the vernal equinox. Take routine precautions to make your home safe and comfortable. A family member can be a bit volatile; smooth over any resentments with a quiet word and kind gesture. Reconsider a residential move or major real estate investments. If in doubt, wait. The final two Full Moons of the winter season on February 19 and March 19 both occur in Virgo and brighten your 9th house. Meditating on these lunations can help you uncover spiritual truths and decide on educational goals. You could recall a past life in a foreign land or be drawn toward learning more about a different culture.

HEALTH

With Gemini ruling your health sector you can enjoy learning and talking about health. As the Twins hint, other people affect your well-being. Always keep a distance from those who are visibly ill with colds or flu, and take precautions against contagious illnesses during retrograde Mercury periods. Health should be good mid-April through early May when Venus is in your 6th house. The Full Moon in Gemini November 23 is a perfect time to try health affirmations or a session with a spiritual healer.

LOVE

You are thinking of stability and commitment in love this year, with Saturn in Taurus in your 5th house of love. Be cautious if a loved one's problems are getting you down, though. An ill or troubled companion might not be the best associate. Jupiter joins Saturn, bringing special growth and luck in romance from late June through late October and again from February 15 on. Your idea of caring and affection often involves providing gifts or security for those you cherish.

FINANCE

All four of the eclipses this year impact your 2nd and 8th houses which rule income and financial matters. Lammas and Candlemas are times when eclipses occur and can mark turning points. Be alert to changes in the economy and your working environment. Good or bad, finances aren't what you expect. Old strategies won't work. Flexibility in coping with surprises will help this year to be a financial success.

SPIRITUALITY

"I Utilize" is your signature phrase. Father Time patronizes the value of wisdom and experience. Call out to him for guidance this important New Year's Eve for a spiritual insight linked to the year 2000 and you. The goat god Pan who charms nymphs with his magical music illustrates the link between the sense of hearing and Saturn and Capricorn. Music as well as meditation on nature sounds can help you awaken spiritually. Reach out to nature. As an earth sign you will be in tune with the devas of wilderness. The Full Moon in Capricorn on June 28, just past Midsummer Day, is a time to develop this idea. The song of the Goat with his pan pipes echoes through the forest glades and glens with special rarefied intensity that week.

AQUARIUS

The year ahead for those born under the sign of the Water Bearer
January 21 to February 19

As the sign of the humanitarian, your emblem is the Water Bearer, who perpetually dispenses to all. The water represents life force and spiritual energy currents. Being eccentric and innovative, you challenge the status quo. Your skill as an armchair psychologist and loyal friend wins you admiration and a wide social circle.

The vernal equinox dawns with two important planets, Uranus (your ruler) and Neptune, in your own sign of Aquarius. This is a rare combination, and you are in the midst of great transformation. A new career or lifestyle could develop in the upcoming months. It's an interesting, if unsettled, year for you. Venus transits your 4th house through April 12. Welcome spring with home beautification projects. The Full Moon in Libra on March 31 turns your attention toward travel and generates an urge to learn which lingers through the week following All Fools' Day.

Mid-April through May 5 you will feel the influence of Mars in Scorpio in your 10th house. Career ambition is high, and competition in evidence. Venus is favorable April 13 – May 8 when it moves through Gemini and trines your Sun. A new love or intriguing pastime helps you celebrate May Eve. May 9 – 23 Mercury squares you. Control stress. A few hours of extra sleep will do wonders for your health. The end of May through July 4 finds Mars in Libra. You'll enjoy sharing your philosophical truths with others. When Mars turns direct on June 5 your progress accelerates. The first week of June finds Venus beginning a transit through your 7th house. You'll pursue cultured, attractive companions. Diplomacy gives you the upper hand in a legal matter. Near Midsummer Day Venus squares Saturn. Others expect a lot from you. Don't be exploited.

Mercury remains in Leo all of July in opposition to your Sun. Others voice interesting ideas; you can learn by observing. July 28 marks an eclipse at the Full Moon in your sign. A cycle of great change is due. Take care of health—your strength and vitality are needed. You could feel the purpose of your destiny at a crossroads by Lammas Eve. The first half of August Venus hovers on the cusp of your 8th house. There is a longing for the finer things in life. The last half of August you will feel Jupiter turning retrograde in the 4th house. You'll realize how much you are a product of your upbringing.

September begins with Mars entering your 11th house where it conjoins Pluto the week of September 19. Associates affect you deeply. An urge to make the world a better place could lead you into action by the equinox. The Full Moon in Aries on September 25 accents your 3rd house. Several short journeys and discussions are likely. A neighbor is friendly and a sibling could visit unexpectedly. The first week of October the Sun in Libra aspects Uranus in Aquarius. There's a burst of inspiration and euphoria. October 6 until All Hallows' Eve Mercury moves through Scorpio in your 10th house. There can be new developments in your career, so keep your knowledge current. Job-related travel can be tiring but worthwhile. Work is interesting, but noise and distractions abound. Take a few minutes aside to get focused.

November 1 – 8 you will shun the limelight, preparing to act in secret. If a bit uncomfortable with an associate, don't reveal sensitive information. You are responding to Mars in the 12th house this week. November 9 – December 4 Venus transits Libra. Make holiday plans and purchases. The Full Moon in Gemini November 23 affects your love life favorably. The

cold, darkening days preceding Yule are warmed by a charming companion and delightful dalliances. Enjoy the arts during the four-week cycle of good times that starts now. Finances improve when Mars enters Aquarius November 27 where it will make favorable aspects through January 3. The 20th century ends with you involved in a variety of exciting activities. Others respond to your example.

January begins with your 12th house highlighted by Capricorn transits through the 19th. Expressing your innermost thoughts is difficult. Large animals and wilderness areas will speak to something deep within you that the civilized world doesn't touch. January 20 brings an eclipse in Leo and your 7th house. Unfairness of any kind will annoy you. Prepare for some abrupt changes in close partnerships; view the change as growth. Mercury enters your sign January 19 – February 5. You'll solve problems and analyze situations with special ease near Candlemas. February 5 brings a solar eclipse in your sign. It will be a birthday month to remember. Old doors are closing to make way for new growth—your life is in flux. Don't give into that contrary side. Instead, be receptive to experimenting.

February 18 – March 13 Venus warms your life with happiness as it moves through Aquarius. Finances are easier to handle, and others treat you well. Make the arts a part of your life, especially computer designs or decorative lighting. The winter closes with Pisces planets in your 2nd house. You will talk and think a great deal about security. The Full Moon on the eve of the spring equinox can bring guidance from another on money matters.

HEALTH

The Moon rules your health with Cancer on the cusp of your 6th house. Lunar phases can coincide with your energy highs and lows. Seasonal cycles also impact you, as you're so sensitive to light and temperature levels. Study your family's health history for clues about your own body. The eclipses coupled with Uranus and Neptune in your birth sign make this a year when illnesses can come and go unexpectedly. Use care if taking medications. Dedicate the Yule sabbat to health magic, for the Full Moon on December 22 falls in your 6th house.

LOVE

Psychic bridges are strong, with intuitive Neptune affecting you. A spiritual or past life tie can emerge, adding new value to an existing love affair. Someone with whom you feel relaxed, yet who is stimulating and multi-faceted would be perfect. A friendly camaraderie impresses you more than jealous intensity. Optimum times for love connections this year are April 13 – May 8, November 9 – December 5, and mid-February through mid-March.

FINANCE

Saturn is your co-ruler, indicating that Aquarians are more materialistic and security conscious than they first appear. This year Saturn transits Taurus at a square to your Sun from the 4th house. Expenses related to your home or a relative might have to be dealt with. While Uranus is retrograde from May 22 – October 23, pressing obligations may arise which keep you from advancing. Keep trying. Patient effort will be rewarded with a brighter financial situation near your birthday. A friend offers sage financial advice at that time which can really make a difference in your long-term security.

SPIRITUALITY

"I Know" is your signature phrase. The Water Bearer's symbolism reaches out to all. The epic of Gilgamesh from Babylonia and Deucalion from Greek myth show how the past is swept away as water annihilates it for the sake of new growth. This constant flowing promises that growth to overcome stagnation is your spiritual awakening. You are in the midst of a cycle of tremendous opening up and growth in the metaphysical sense with both Uranus and Neptune in your birth sign. The eclipses in Aquarius on July 28 and February 5 provide gateways for this to occur. Pay special attention to the sabbats nearest those dates for maximum spiritual awakening.

PISCES

The year ahead for those born under the sign of the Fishes
February 20 to March 20

Your symbol, the two Fish forever joined yet swimming in opposite directions, illustrates the inner complexities you never quite seem to resolve. Extremely sensitive, you must watch how companions and surroundings affect you. Often Pisceans are performers, artists, musicians, or dream analysts, seeking to give expression to various kinds of perception.

Retrograde Mercury in your own sign welcomes the vernal equinox. You can find a long-lost object or connect with an old acquaintance before it turns direct on April 3. Through April 17 the Mercury in Pisces transit favors travel and decision making. The New Moon on April 16 finds you ready to evaluate financial situations. It conjoins Jupiter, your co-ruler. Mars in Scorpio highlights your 9th house until just after Beltane. New horizons of adventure beckon. From mid-May until just after Midsummer Day Jupiter moves rapidly through your 2nd house. Opportunities to add to earnings abound, though you'll long to make some major purchases. Neptune, your ruler, turns retrograde May 7. A subtle cycle begins when you must be your own best friend and keep a positive mind set. The 12th house is involved. The Venus transit through Cancer May 9 – June 5 brings love your way.

Happiness stimulates your natural creativity. Follow through with inspirations. June 7–26 Mercury is favorable. It's a good time for vacations and creative writing. Your ability to communicate with children is exceptional. July finds Leo transits including Venus, Mercury, and the Sun in your 6th house. Get organized, and learn more about health and nutrition. Stay grounded near the time of the lunar eclipse July 28. It's activating your 12th house and Neptune. There are storms gathering in the astral world.

August 1 – 14 retrograde Venus touches the cusp of your 7th house. The meaning of love is changing for those close to you. Tolerance is your best defense. August 15 – September 2 Mars is favorably aspected in your 9th house. You'll enjoy challenges and competitions. The Full Moon in Pisces August 26 brings a peak of energy. Others notice you, and much is accomplished. The first half of September Mercury transits your 7th house. Talkative people present novel ideas. Listen, but don't commit too quickly. Both Mars and Pluto square Mercury, showing that an impulsive judgement could be regretted. October 1 – 16 Mars completes a transit through your 10th house. Keep a positive attitude about competition. There can be some anger linked to your career—channel it positively. Neptune turns direct on October 14 in your 12th house. By All Hallows' Eve you will be on the path to inner peace. The Full Moon in Taurus October 24 shines in your 3rd house. A sibling reveals how much you're loved and cherished.

November 1 – 9 Mercury touches the cusp of your 10th house. Ignore the many rumors at work. Information regarding career situations is distorted; don't initiate a job change at present. November 9 – December 5 Venus moves through Libra while favorably aspecting Aquarius transits. Your 8th house is blessed. Investments can pay off, and others offer worthwhile financial advice. There is a transcendent quality to love. The New Moon December 7 in Sagittarius combines with Pluto in your 10th house to generate two weeks of readjustment and growth directly related to career. People in positions of power respect you and need your support. Rise to the demands placed upon you, and success is assured. The winter solstice couples with a Full Moon in Cancer. Your 5th and 11th houses

are involved. The Yule holiday is a time of friendship and romance. Listen to your heart in forming resolutions for the new millennium.

The first week of January Mars enters your 7th house, remaining until February 11 in opposition to your Sun. Others are assertive and restless; don't respond angrily or ill will could accelerate. Injustice can upset you, but be low key about seeking recourse. The eclipse of January 20 affects your 6th house. It's easy to be critical of others. Remember that they might not have your intelligence or experience. Be alert to the needs of an animal companion. A creature who trusts you has something to communicate at Candlemas. February accents your 12th house. The Sun, Uranus, and Neptune in Aquarius are all amplified by the solar eclipse on the 5th. Control emotions and imagination. Dreams and psychic experiences abound; interpret symbolism carefully. Don't spend too much time alone—you need the release and perspective of companionship. Mercury transits Pisces from early February through the vernal equinox.

The end of winter finds you on the move. February 15 Jupiter changes signs, moving into Taurus and your 3rd house. Good news comes about work and financial ventures. Short journeys are profitable. A cheerful word of encouragement from another contains gems of wisdom. The New Moon March 6 in Pisces favorably aspects Saturn. The established and traditional are assets during the following two weeks. That lunation helps you start on worthwhile projects to conclude the year on a positive note.

HEALTH

With Neptune, associated with chemicals, as your ruler, always control consumption of alcohol, sugar, and food additives. Wellness is linked to a balanced body chemistry. Reiki and other types of spiritual healing will often work wonders, for you're incredibly sensitive to subtle energy fields. Leo is on the cusp of your 6th house. Two eclipses there this year, in August and January, promise some shifts in vitality. Be aware of nuances within your body. Get extra rest during those months.

LOVE

You dread being shut out and appreciate a lover who reveals everything to you. Generosity to the point of genuine sacrifice characterizes your approach to love. Remember that a relationship is to be enjoyed—if there is too much anxiety or suffering it might be getting addictive. Be aware of how a relationship impacts your overall quality of life. Love triangles frequently follow Pisceans, but you have a way of winning out in the end. May and early June as well as December find Venus bringing harmony and the promise of love. The Full Moon at Yuletide falls in your 5th house of love and should generate happy romantic interludes as you celebrate the 21st century.

FINANCE

With Jupiter in your 2nd house of money from the vernal equinox until June 28 and again October 24 – February 14 you can expect to move ahead financially this year. The Full Moon March 31 in your 8th house hints at investments as well as tax returns, inheritances, or insurance settlements bringing extra income. Often there is an unpredictable quality to your security. You may get a windfall by playing an occasional game of chance.

SPIRITUALITY

"I Believe" is your spiritual signature phrase. In China, Kwan Yin, goddess of redemption and compassion, is portrayed riding a fish. Cupid and Venus were rescued from the Titans by twin fish in Greco-Roman mythology. The water and fish suggest a cleansing away of old karma to prepare for a new life. This year Neptune in your 12th house indicates dream work and time spent alone will promote your spiritual quest. The eclipse of July 28 is conjunct Neptune and indicates that Lammastide brings spiritual awakening. The Full Moon in Pisces August 26 marks another time of great sensitivity and spiritual development.

999999999

Numerologists call nine a complete number. It is the highest of a sequence (1 to 9, 10 to 19, 20 to 29) marking the transition to a following series. And nine flips through some odd arithmetic acrobats, including reproducing itself when multiplied by any other single number:

2 x 9 = 18 and 1 + 8 = 9
3 x 9 = 27 and 2 + 7 = 9
4 x 9 = 36 and 3 + 6 = 9
5 x 9 = 45 and 4 + 5 = 9
6 x 9 = 54 and 5 + 4 = 9
7 x 9 = 63 and 6 + 3 = 9
8 x 9 = 72 and 7 + 2 = 9
9 x 9 = 81 and 8 + 1 = 9

We've searched in vain to discover why a cat is said to have nine lives. The earliest written reference we could find is in John Heywood's *Proverbs*, 1546.

A woman hath nine lives like a cat.

Cat-o'-nine tails is a whip with nine knotted cords used to flog offenders. Whipping with "a trinity of trinities" produced welts on the skin not unlike cat scratches.

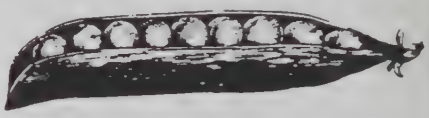
An old English proverb gave rise to the expression "a nine day's wonder," meaning a short-lived sensation.

A wonder lasts nine days, and then the puppy's eyes are open.

The traditional magic circle is nine feet in diameter for a very sound reason: a complete circle has 360 degrees, and

3 + 6 + 0 = 9

And if you find nine green peas in a pod, lay the empty shell on the threshold of the kitchen door, and the first person that enters will bring you good luck.



A favored magic talisman is a wreath of yarn and feathers with a strong emphasis on the number nine.

THE WITCHES' LADDER

Knot nine feathers into a cord formed by braiding three-foot lengths of red, black, and white strands of yarn while chanting:

Tie one, the spell's begun,
Tie two, no power undo,
Tie three, so shall it be,
Tie four, forever more,
Tie five, the charm's alive,
Tie six, its magic fix,
Tie seven, now under heaven,
Tie eight, work winds of fate,
Tie nine, to my design.

Secure the ends of the cord together and hang it high in a room where carefree time is spent.

Window on the Weather

The most powerful and publicized El Niño event of the century has passed. Disruptions in weather patterns caused by the warming of Pacific Ocean waters have moderated, and the atmosphere adjusts and reacts to more seasonal factors. But looking ahead, weather trends will soon be underway that will counterbalance the unusual rainfall and temperature excesses created by El Niño. Effects will be experienced from a correspondingly strong La Niña phenomenon, identified as a cooling of Pacific waters.

Some weather changes will be subtle — the West Coast, for instance, will enjoy mild, sunny winters. But the East will experience somewhat drier yet drastically colder winters for several years. Winter precipitation will generally bring lower temperatures, and a strong possibility exists for large-scale blizzard conditions on the East Coast.

Even more ominously, the likelihood of East and Gulf Coast hurricanes initiated by La Niña is increasing for the foreseeable future. Dr. William Gray of Colorado State University, an acclaimed hurricane researcher, predicts that the East Coast will sustain many billions of dollars in property damage over the next 20 years. It is interesting to note that during this century, major El Niño effects were followed in southern Florida by major hurricanes sustained during 1921, 1935 and 1992.

In general, the threat of hurricanes and winter storms will be significant for at least the next two years.

— TOM C. LANG

SPRING

A little Madness in the Spring
Is wholesome even for the King.

— EMILY DICKENSON

MARCH 1999 – As spring approaches, abundant sun will bring welcome warmth to the Pacific Coast and mountainous West. Cyclones will merely provide a glancing blow; most will pass north into British Columbia and Alaska.

The East will experience colder weather than normal, especially throughout the Great Lakes and Northeast. Several intense ocean storms will brew off the East Coast and threaten to blanket the mid-Atlantic states and the Northeast with a late season mantle of white. One particular storm will pass south of Cape Cod between the15th and 20th.

The Great Plains and Mississippi valleys will enjoy cool and relatively dry weather.

Brush fires are likely in Florida, fanned by brisk northwest winds.

APRIL 1999 – Virtually the entire East Coast will enjoy a cool, dry month. A persistent northwest wind will keep late-season winter storms at sea and limit foggy spells to short durations.

One serious blizzard will bring howling winds and a deep blanket of snow to Minnesota and the Dakotas.

Beautiful early spring weather will open the baseball season coast to coast. West Coast weather will be particularly fine, though central California valley fog can be long lasting.

Fires remain a peril in Florida.

MAY 1999 – A warm weather pattern broadens throughout the western half of the country and hastens high-country snow melts. Wilderness fire danger is high this year, so wise back-country hikers will exercise caution.

Rain becomes widespread and longer lasting from the Ohio Valley to New England, with a persistent east wind bringing a week of drizzly weather from New York City to "downeast" Maine.

Hot weather, slow to return to Florida, is forestalled by late-season cool fronts. Refreshing air masses advance as far south as the Keys. The Appalachian states enjoy particularly fine weather.

I sing of brooks, of blossoms, birds, and bowers: Of April, May, of June and July-flowers.

— ROBERT HERRICK

SUMMER

Summer afternoon — summer afternoon; to me those have always been the two most beautiful words in the English language.

— HENRY JAMES

JUNE 1999 – Where spring floods lingered longest, golden sunshine returns with summer warmth in the Ohio Valley and the Northeast.

A narrow strip of nearly uninterrupted rainfall plagues the northern Great Lakes and extends eastward to northern New England.

Elsewhere, balmy weather descends on the Southeast with fine beach weather enjoyed from Georgia to North Carolina's outer banks. West Texas, Oklahoma and Nebraska tornadoes are particularly fierce this year, and late spring Santa Ana winds may bring an early fire season to California.

JULY 1999 – A persistent airflow at high altitudes from northwest to southeast will keep areas east of the Mississippi Valley warm and dry. Campers in New England and Michigan should be wary of several outbreaks of thunderstorms and isolated tornadoes. Late afternoon thunderstorms are also strong on Florida's west coast from Tampa to Naples.

The monsoon season is underway across the Intermountain West, while the West Coast enjoys ideal summer weather. Southern California surfers will marvel at large cresting waves generated by Pacific hurricanes from the Baja peninsula.

AUGUST 1999 – Hot, humid days and balmy nights denote a stagnant weather pattern throughout the East. An occasional late day downpour will burst forth in the heavy summer heat and can last for hours in mountainous terrain. Boaters should be aware of evening lightning masked by haze.

The tropics stir with a long-tracking Cape Verde hurricane forming in the eastern Atlantic by the 20th. In general, tropical activity will be more intense this year.

The West will enjoy consistently warm and dry weather, and the fire danger will remain high in California and the Pacific Northwest. Monsoonal rains remain persistent in the Rockies.

Summertime and the livin' is easy,
Fish are jumpin' and the
cotton is high.

— IRA GERSHWIN

AUTUMN

But it's a long, long while
From May to December;
And the days grow short
When you reach September.

— MAXWELL ANDERSON

SEPTEMBER 1999 – In recent decades, rapid increases in coastal populations and a lull in major landfalling hurricanes is breeding an ominous complacency. With this year's strong La Niña event, hurricane intensity and frequency will be greater in the Atlantic ocean. The likelihood of a devastating hurricane sweeping a major coastal community is higher than at any other time since 1992, when Hurricane Andrew leveled southern Florida. This area is particularly vulnerable, with a one in five chance of a strong hurricane strike. People along the Eastern Seaboard should have a family hurricane plan and follow the local weather forecasts carefully.

OCTOBER 1999 – An early fall speeds summer's retreat this year throughout the East. Fall colors peak in northern New England and New York State by midmonth.

A similar timetable can be expected in northern Michigan and Wisconsin.

The fire season is well underway throughout the West with generally dry conditions broken only by an occasional mountain shower.

Cold fronts pass through Florida, reaching the Keys by the 10th reducing the threat of hurricanes to all except the Texas coast by the 15th. An early snowfall dusts the peaks of northern New England by month's end, a month largely uneventful throughout the East except for a noticeable cooling throughout the region.

NOVEMBER 1999 – Calm weather early in the month is shaken by an icy blast from Canada by the 10th. Lake effect snows stall travel in western New York and northeast Ohio.

An offshore storm enhances northwest winds from New England to the mid Atlantic.

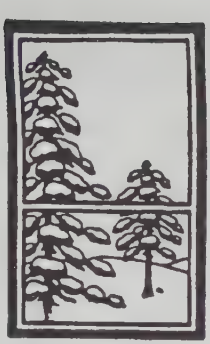
Pleasantly cool air settles into the South as the rainy season ends in Florida.

The West remains dry while Santa Ana winds fan fires in southern California.

Texas and the Southern Plains enjoy a spell of Indian Summer as temperatures soar to the eighties at midmonth.

I saw old Autumn in the misty morn
Stand shadowless like silence, listening to silence.

— THOMAS HOOD



WINTER

I love snow, and all the forms
Of radiant frost.

— SHELLEY

DECEMBER 1999 – Throughout the East, the millennium ends with an icy blast from Canada. A long stretch of sub-zero temperatures will grip the Great Lakes states and northern New England. However, this will hold most stormy weather offshore and allow smooth holiday travel.

Lake-effect snowstorms rage on in Buffalo, Rochester and Cleveland.

The weather remains cool and dry in the Southeast, including Florida, where a midmonth cold front spawns a brief outbreak of tornado producing thunderstorms.

Tranquil weather spans the West, though Yule snows are deep in the Rockies and bring terrific early-season skiing.

JANUARY 2000 – Record-breaking cold air is well established in the East this year — the coldest winter in a decade is underway. Relentless cold spreads as far south as central Florida, where a rare freeze threatens the citrus crop. A short-lived blizzard races through the Eastern Seaboard by the 20th, disrupting air travel to major airports. Lake-effect snows end, leaving a blanket of white that will last until spring in upstate New York.

Denver enjoys balmy Chinook winds and temperatures in the seventies around the 15th.

A major storm plows into central California at month's end with gale-swept rains in San Francisco and a mantle of white in the Sierra Nevada.

FEBRUARY 2000 – The relentless cold slowly ebbs east of the Rockies as storm frequency increases somewhat. Three notable storms sweep from the nation's heartland to the Atlantic Coast bringing wind and snow.

An ice storm can paralyze the nation's capitol between the 5th and the 10th.

One blockbuster snowstorm is probable in the Northeast this month with snowfall amounts exceeding 30 inches from interior Pennsylvania to Massachusetts.

A dry and seasonable pattern is established in the Northern Plains, and the Rockies and West Coast enjoy an early spring.

And winter slumbering in the open air,
Wears on his face a dream of Spring!

— SAMUEL COLERIDGE

Tomb-painting, 18th dynasty

THE CONCEPT OF MAAT

Maat, the ancient Egyptian goddess of truth, may be the world's earliest deity. The old myths say she came forth from the marriage of chaos and the wind to set the path of the Sun god Ra across the sky. Maat created order where none existed. Later she maintained universal balance and hopeful expectation with the help of her male counterpart Thoth, god of wisdom and records. Maat was called the daughter of Ra, for she guided his daily journey from rise to set. Artists personified Maat as a beautiful young woman wearing a single upright feather on her head. That it was an ostrich feather is significant.

Keen observers of wildlife, Egyptians would never be taken in by the ostrich head-in-the-sand fable. The 8-foot, 300-pound bird was worthy of respect, admired for its courage and prudence, but most of all for its vigilance. The flightless birds protected their eggs from the fierce desert sun and predators by stretching out flat to cover the nest, leaving only a torso hump visible—a shape easily mistaken for a mound of sand. The ostrich feather and Maat herself came to symbolize the principle of justice, righteousness, and goodness. Anything that was real, true, and genuine came from Maat—

the goddess and the abstract quality she represented.

The doctrine of Maat as a basis for conduct guided the Egyptians from beginning to end. The Last Judgement took place in the Hall of Maat, and although many other divinities and spiritual themes gained prominence over the three millenniums of Egyptian civilization, Maat retained her original prestige.

What could have inspired the concept of Maat? We can only speculate, for Egyptian chronology continues to remain tentative at best. To the dismay of some traditional Egyptologists, in recent years other scientific disciplines—notably geology and astronomy—have sought to place the construction of the sphinx and pyramids at Gizeh as early as 10,500 B.C. These monuments are obviously not the productions of a primitive society. It may be safely assumed, if solid evidence is presented, that a high degree of culture had already been achieved in the Nile Valley by 12,500 B.C. Consider then that Vega, the brightest star in the northern hemisphere, marked celestial north during that era.

The position of true north slowly shifts over many centuries due to the

Earth's odd shape and irregular movement. At varying times, different stars have served as pole stars. Today it is Polaris in Ursa Minor, and in 3000 B.C. it was Thuban in the Dragon's tail. These pole stars pale in comparison to the brilliant blue-white Vega in the Lyre, pole star of the 13th millennium B.C. Like a jewel in the night sky, Vega was always in the same place, always visible, for pole stars neither rise nor set. It must have been a beacon of goodness in the mysterious and ever-changing universe, useful in travel and a totally reliable and constant source of comfort. The Egyptians believed that what was useful was good. Ancient myths and temple records recognized the north as "the place of Maat," a remote region of the sky with a star that seemed to stand still. A viable system of ethics and spiritual assurance giving an ancient people serenity and happiness may have been inspired by a star.

Star and ostrich motifs from predynastic Egyptian pottery

Nine Sacred Herbs

MUGWORT

Anglo-Saxons believed disease was spread by toxins blowing in the winds. Songs, salt, water, and herbs were trusted means of protection from the flying venom. The *Lacnunga*, a 10th-century herbal, names nine sacred plants and a chant in their praise.

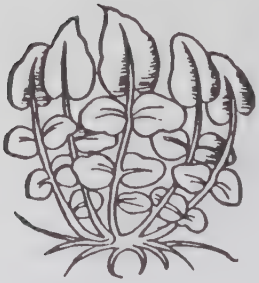
These nine attack against nine venoms.
A worm came creeping and tore asunder a man.
Then took Woden nine magic twigs and smote the serpent
That he in nine pieces dispersed.
Now these nine herbs have power
Against nine magic outcasts,
Against nine venoms, against nine flying things,
Against the loathed things that over land rove.

PLANTAIN

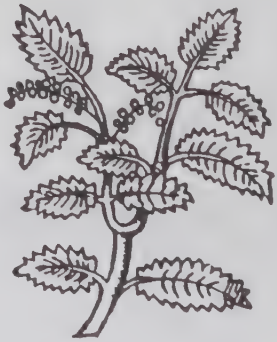
MUGWORT. *Artemisia vulgaris*—guards against the unseen power of evil. The dried leaves stuffed in a pillow bring sweet dreams, lend vigor when steeped in bath water, and prevent fatigue on a long journey.

PLANTAIN. *Plantago major*—is the Saxon *waybroad* in old herbals, for it thrives beside roadways. Fresh leaves draw out infections, halt bleeding in minor wounds, and ease discomfort from burns and stings.

WATERCRESS. *Nasturtium officinalis*—supplies a generous amount of vitamin C. Its juice added to water is a tonic to erase listlessness.



WATERCRESS



NETTLE

CAMOMILE

BETONY. *Stachys betonica*—appears as the fourth herb in later versions of the *Nine Herbs Charm*. *Atterlothe* of the original listing defies translation. Betony, however, serves well as a substitute, for it was anciently regarded as a cure for all ills of the body and the soul.

CAMOMILE. *Anthemis nobilis*—never fails to lift the spirits with its sweet scent. *Maythen*, as it was known to the Saxons, is the "plants' physician," as it revives ailing plants when set near them. Humans enjoy its benefits as well.

NETTLE. *Urtica dioica*—serves many useful purposes. The leaves staunch bleeding and soothe burns. Its seeds stimulate appetite. Nettle juice is an excellent hair lotion.

CRAB APPLE. *Pyrus malus*—has long been associated with health and renewal. The original wild apple from which all varieties derive is said to promote deep sleep and increase energy.

CHERVIL. *Anthriscus cerefolium*—may possess a powerful brain stimulant. It was once the sovereign remedy to restore the will to live. THYME, *Thymus serpyllum*, occurs in other lists of the Nine Sacred Herbs, and is said to cheer melancholy natures.

FENNEL. *Foeniculum vulgare*—conveys longevity, gives strength and courage while its pleasant aroma discourages evil spirits. Fennel in the diet promotes good eyesight and fights obesity.

THYME

CRAB APPLE

BETONY

CHERVIL

FENNEL

Canine Companions

The true dog lover is rarely swayed from a canine companion once a connection is felt. However, knowing what to expect from the canine in your life makes the relationship infinitely more enjoyable. If you are considering a dog of mixed descent (and some of the nicest are), take an educated guess at the heritage and factor in the probable behavioral characteristics of the breeds.

Sporting Dogs. Bred to assist in the hunt, they include the retrievers, setters, and spaniels. Boundless energy is their defining characteristic, evident in their capacity for affection and loyalty to their caretakers. Strong-willed, they can be ruthless jumpers, onto furniture, into unbidding laps, up into the air.

The retrievers are strongly mouth oriented. They learn by taking things in their mouths and can be voracious chewers if left unguided. This characteristic is strongest from birth until about a year and a half, when they calm noticeably.

The most important aspects of care for sporting dogs are exercise and routine. With so much energy coursing through their enthusiastic bodies, if left unchannelled they tend to be high-strung and nervous, especially the setters. Training can be a challenge, since their keen sense of smell often distracts them from the task at hand.

Hounds. A diverse crowd, all were associated with some type of hunting. As a result the sight-hounds (greyhound, borzoi, Afghan) have keen senses of vision and smell; the nose-hounds (coonhounds, beagles, and bassetts) possess extraordinary noses. Strength of spirit and consistency characterize these canines. With the exception of the beagles, who are apt to be high-strung and energy-driven, the hounds tend toward dignity and strength of character. Affectionate and intelligent, they are highly sensitive to their human companions and their reserve hides a storehouse of intuitive understanding.

The sight-hounds can have difficulty learning to negotiate stairs. These graceful leapers often catch the uninitiated offguard by taking entire flights of stairs in one giant leap. Otherwise the sight-hounds are generally reserved and quiet, rarely opting to use their voices unless something warrants comment.

The nose-hounds are accomplished communicators. Baying and howling are their domain, and they do it with vigor. If not sleeping or working, they are expressing themselves.

Illustrations by Arthur Rackham

Working Dogs. Bred to herd and guard, these dogs take their appointed tasks seriously. Giving them a job helps channel their energy. If left without a task, these intelligent dogs become bored and are prone to mischief.

The guarders (Doberman pinscher, rottweiler, German shepherd, mastiff) are the most fiercely loyal to their companions. Care should be taken when they are in the presence of strangers, as they are always on the lookout for harmful intentions. If left to their own devices, the guarding breeds can be possessive and stubborn, and can be unruly if training is not undertaken early in life. The guarders will defend their caretaker to the end. A good trait if desired, but it is wise to let them know when you want defending.

The herders (collies, Shetland sheepdog, Old English sheepdog) will, if given nothing else to herd, herd anything. Children, adults, the family cat, all are fair game. Highly intuitive, the herders are good-natured, steady, and faithful to the core.

Terriers. Boundless enthusiasm is their motto, with tenacity running a close second. These bombshells hang on for dear life. Many were bred as ratters, delving into deep holes and tunnels after their prey. Sensitive and intuitive, these highly courageous creatures are extremely endearing to the right people. Discipline is a key ingredient in the lives of most terrier owners, but some find themselves bowing to the will of their tenacious housemates and really not minding. Spend some time in a terrier household if you are considering one. The decision will almost always be a crystal clear yes, or an oh, my goodness, that's not for me; no!

With high enthusiasm, they charm the right people, offending all others. They are outspoken and highly opinionated, and are prone to yappiness. They are also notoriously difficult to housebreak. But for the terrier devotee, these are hardly overriding detriments, just something to be dealt with.

Toys. Tiny and fragile, the delicate nature of these breeds is their most endearing trait. Highly devoted to their caretakers and snobbishly oblivious to those they don't know, they can be nervous and wrought with worry if they don't know the whereabouts of their people. Aloof and dignified, these little dictators reek with regality. Since many have long coats, it is imperative to establish a firm grooming regimen. If introduced to it early, they love to be groomed and fussed over, and will continue to charm their humble servants for the effort.

—KERRY CUDMORE

THE CELTIC TREE CALENDAR

Beth (Birch)	December 24 to January 20
Luis (Rowan)	January 21 to February 17
Nion (Ash)	February 18 to March 17
Fearn (Alder)	March 18 to April 14
Saille (Willow)	April 15 to May 12
Uath (Hawthorn)	May 13 to June 9
Duir (Oak)	June 10 to July 7
Tinne (Holly)	July 8 to August 4
Coll (Hazel)	August 5 to September 1
Muin (Vine)	September 2 to September 29
Gort (Ivy)	September 30 to October 27
Ngetal (Reed)	October 28 to November 24
Ruis (Elder)	November 25 to December 22

December 23 is not ruled by any tree for it is the "day" of the proverbial "year and day" in the earliest courts of law.

THE WILLOW TREE

Willows are magical trees with slender pale silver-green leaves. The weeping willow originated in China, where it graced cemeteries as a symbol of immortality, and the tree had spread to the Near East by Biblical times. An Old Testament reference to the exiled Jews hanging their harps upon the willows as they wept beside the rivers of Babylon led to the weeping willow's classification by Linnaeus as *Silax babylonica*. In ancient Greece, the goddess Hera was born under a willow on the island of Samos, where a magnificent temple was built to honor her. In the underworld kingdom of Pluto and Persephone, Orpheus touched a willow branch and received the gift of supernatural eloquence. Willow groves are sacred to Hecate, dark goddess of witchcraft.

During the Middle Ages, the willow became a traditional motif adorning tombs. Early 19th-century gravestones throughout New England were decorated with the willow emblem.

An old spell uses willow to dismiss love and transform passion into friendship.

At Full Moon snip a foot-long tendril from a weeping willow tree and braid it with equal lengths of bright red and cool green yarn. Tie three knots in the braid and hang the charm in an airy room until the Moon is in its last quarter. On three successive nights untie the knots one by one in privacy and silence while concentrating on your desire. Before the New Moon rises, burn the red strand to ashes and throw to the winds. Coil the willow and green wool together and place in an envelope for safe-keeping.

The willow of the Druids was not the weeping willow, but the tree or shrub we know as the pussy willow. The Irish called the pussy willow one of the "seven noble trees of the land."

The pussy willow is used in love charms as a guard against evil and its wands are often employed in divination. Reflecting the ancient status of the pussy willow, it is the wood to "knock on" and avert bad luck.

Medieval herbalists placed all willows under the rulership of the moon.

Willow from Gerard's *Herbal*

THE WAY OF THE MOON

A New Moon rises with the Sun,
Her waxing half at midday shows,
The Full Moon climbs at sunset hour,
And waning half the midnight knows.

NEW	2000	FULL	NEW	2001	FULL
January 6		January 20	January 24		January 9
February 5		February 19	February 23		February 8
March 6		March 19	March 24		March 9
April 4		April 18	April 23		April 7
May 4		May 18	May 22		May 7
June 2		June 16	June 21		June 5
July 1/31		July 16	July 20		July 5
August 29		August 15	August 18		August 4
September 27		September 13	September 17		September 2
October 27		October 13	October 16		October 2
November 25		November 11	November 15		November 1/30
December 25		December 11	December 14		December 30

Life takes on added dimension when you match your activities to the waxing and waning of the Moon. Observe the sequence of her phases to learn the wisdom of constant change within complete certainty.

THE WITCHES' QUARTERLY

This quarterly newsletter appears at each change of season: the vernal equinox (March 21st), summer solstice (June 21st), the autumnal equinox (September 21st), and winter solstice (December 21st). Each issue boasts a myriad of special features including an astrological forecast for each day, myths, useful information about plants and animals, and rituals and lore to help celebrate the passing seasons. Available by subscription. 12 pages. Mailed in a discreet envelope.

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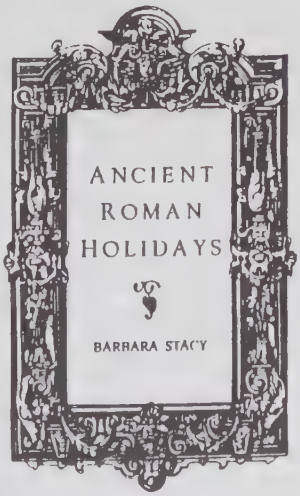
New from The Witches' Almanac

ANCIENT ROMAN HOLIDAYS

The glory that was Rome awaits you in Barbara Stacy's classic presentation of a festive year in pagan times. From Janus, god of beginnings, to Saturn's wintery feast, the text is complemented with illustrations by 19th-century antiquarian Thomas Hope drawn from archaic sources. Here are the gods and goddesses as the Romans conceived them, accompanied by the annual rites performed in their worship. Scholarly, light-hearted—a rare combination. 64 pages.



For ordering information, turn the page.

THE MOON CALENDAR

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